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Thesis for the Degree

of Ph.D.

November 1968.

British public opinion and the
rise of Imperialist sentiment
in relation to expansion in
Africa, 1880 - 1900.



ABSTRACT.

The thesis traces the rise of popular Imperialist sentiment, which developed via Conservative clubs and fringe groups such as the Primrose League. Pressure for expansion reached a peak in the Sudan campaign of 1884-5 and the mass eulogy of General Gordon. An uninhibited and aggressive belief in expansion overlapped with jingoism which reached a height during the Boer War with violently patriotic displays.

Humanitarian pressure groups such as the Anti-Slavery Society and the Missions were important in the development of an Imperialist position. Humanitarians demanded the annexation of East/Central Africa and Uganda in order to put an end to the slave trade, to help the spread of Christianity or to provide benefits for the native population. The agitation for the retention of Uganda in 1892 was largely organised by the Church Missionary Society.

Commercial arguments for expansion played only a minor part in public opinion; though a small group of chartered company promoters and African enthusiasts were thinking in terms of new markets and raw materials. But popular Imperialism was best defined as

an expression of nationalism and hostility to foreigners, culminating in aggressively militaristic stands over certain issues, - notable the Sudan campaign of 1884-5, Fashoda in 1898 and the Boer War 1899-1900.

The strongest opposition to expansion in Africa came from Nonconformists and Gladstonian Radicals or Socialists. This did not always imply hostility towards all Empire however; the Empire of the self-governing colonies and respectable dependencies was widely accepted by 1900, and even expansion was not opposed on principle so much as on the merits of each individual case.

The intervention of the Liberal Government in Egypt and the Sudan in 1882-5 helped to reconcile a number of Liberals to interference in Africa. There was a noticable absence of opposition to the annexation of Uganda, and of the Sudan in 1898. Nonconformists and Liberals made a strong stand against the impending Boer War of 1899, but after war broke out the opposition disintegrated, - Socialists and Gladstonian Nonconformists had little in common apart from dislike of the war.

The period thus shows an erosion of Liberal anti-Imperialism. Liberals who started in the full flush of

Midlothian opposition to Disraelian Foreign Policy,
began to absorb a good many Imperialist assumptions
by the end of the century.

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The strands of Imperialist ideology 1880-1900.

"We are all Imperialists now.." a writer in Justice reflected in October 1898. By 1900 it could be asserted, - "The differences between "Liberal Imperialism", "Sane Imperialism", "Common-sense Imperialism" and "Jingo Imperialism" may not be quite unreal or academic. If they savour of hair-splitting they tend also to party-splitting. But Imperialism transcends our political distinctions and distractions.." (1) Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman speaking in November 1899 observed "...that every one nowadays appears to cultivate some peculiar species of his own of what is called Imperialism and to try to get some qualifying adjective of his own before the word." (2) The majority of articulate opinion debated not whether Empire in the abstract was a good thing, but what kind of Empire was most desirable in practice.

As against Jingo Imperialism, most Liberals by the end of the century affected to believe in sane Imperialism, - a contrast "between the coarse and soulless patriotism of the hour and that nobler Imperialism in which all true Englishmen, to whatever political camp they may belong for the time being, must still

(1) Fortnightly Review, 1900, "The literary inspiration of Imperialism." p.262.

(2) J.A. Spender, The life of the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, G.C.B. London 1923, Vol 1, p.257.

believe." (1) In an article entitled "The danger of Empire", a Liberal writer claimed "Delve deep into the heart of the Little Englander and ^{it} ~~it~~ will probably be found that he is almost as proud as the common jingo of the extent and power of the British Empire, but that he seeks to love the people which compose the nation even better than the nation itself." (2) A distinction was made by the Quaker Liberal, Robert Spence Watson between Conservatives who wanted to make the Empire bigger and Liberals who wanted to make it better. (3) His ideal was "...an Empire which shall be great, not through the multitude of its people, not because of its boundless territories, not in consequence of the strength which is ever over exercised to over-reach and over-come others, and to add more and ever more to its numbers and its size, but of an Empire which shall be conspicuous over all others by the wisdom of its government, by the content and happiness of the governed, by the feeling of brotherhood uniting altogether its constituent parts..." (4)

(1) Contemporary Review, Vol 76, 1899, Robert Buchannan, "The voice of the hooligan" pp.774-89.

(2) Westminster Review, June 1900, F.A.A. Rowland, "The danger of Empire" pp.605-11.

(3) Robert Spence Watson, The National Liberal Federation, London 1902, p.17.

(4) Percy Corder, Robert Spence Watson, London 1914, pp.202-3.

This view of Imperialism desired to preserve the existing Empire without expanding it; as Sir William Harcourt said in 1899, "But what does that Imperialism you hear so much about, mean? If it means pursuing a policy which is the wisest and best for that great Empire to which we belong, of course we are all Imperialists in that sense... There is another and exactly opposite view of Imperial policy. It is... the acquisition of fresh populations, the adoption of additional burdens..." (1) "True" Imperialism was canvassed in opposition to "false" Imperialism. "True" Imperialists were "...blind neither to the glories nor yet to the responsibilities of the British Empire." (2) But by this they meant basically the Empire of self governing colonies which had been a generally accepted fact as early as the 1870's. Little Englandism in the sense of wishing to break up the English-settled dominions, did not exist in 1900. Liberal writers approved of the old colonial Empire and distinguished it from what was sometimes called "new" Imperialism - implying expansion for its own sake, reliance on force and dubious financial expedients epitomized by the activities of Cecil Rhodes. (3)

(1) A.C. Gardiner, The life of Sir William Harcourt, London 1923, Vol 2, p.496.

(2) Hirst, Murray and Hammond, Liberalism and Empire, London 1900, preface.

(3) The heart of Empire, London 1901, essay on "Imperialism" by G.P. Gooch, pp. 311, 334, 339.

The legitimate Empire also included India; it was largely taken for granted that British troops and administrators would remain there for an indefinite period of time, and the occupation could be justified by the benefits it provided, - "unless we hold India for the good of the Indian people, we have no justification for holding it at all." (1) Egypt, which on its occupation in 1882, was regarded as a dramatic instance of expansionism, by many Liberals, had with the passage of time, fallen into the category of a model dependency. (2) Recently acquired territories in the Sudan and Central Africa were undergoing the same metamorphosis from dangerous Disraelian type adventures to orderly examples of British administration, of which even anti-Imperialists might be proud. Anti-Imperialism by no means implies opposition to all Empire, but to aggressive land-grabbing in tropical areas, and to the desire to paint the map red out of sheer acquisitiveness. As Campbell-Bannerman put it, "love and pride of Empire" should not become "greed of Empire". (3) Anti-Imperialists were distinguished by dislike of new expansion in countries such as Africa; new territories might only be swallowed as fait accomplis by an earnest consideration of the

(1) Percy Corder, Op cit, p.196.

(2) The heart of Empire, op cit, p.319.

(3) J.A. Spender, Op cit, p.303.

benefits conferred by British rule. To some extent, by the end of the century the differences between the exponents of the varieties of Imperialism were those of emphasis. "Sane" Imperialists stressed responsibility and good government as against the aura of grandeur and prestige surrounding "jingo" Imperialism. Some Liberals had adapted to Imperialist terminology, - a leading Nonconformist Gladstonian J.G. Rogers, writing in 1901 said, - "the British Empire is a great fact....The extinction of the British Empire would, I do not hesitate to say, be the greatest political calamity that could darken the twentieth century." (1) Others thought "Liberalism and Imperialism are not words which go readily together; there is a sinister meaning underlying the word Imperial." (2) The word still had, as in the 1870's, connotations of despotism and aggression. One writer thought, "The name Empire is charged with associations for which Liberals have little liking and they would prefer to apply the term "commonwealth" to the confederacy of states which makes up the dominions of the crown." (3) There was quite a large measure of agreement between Liberals and Conservatives on the value of the white colonies and old-established dependencies. Enthusiasm for the colonies had developed from 1868,

(1) Nineteenth Century, November 1901, pps. 852-863, J.G. Rogers, "The anxiety of the hour."

(2) New Century Review, March 1900, pps. 323-330, A.E.T. Newman, "Liberal Imperialists", p.324.

(3) Hirst, Murray and Hammond, Op cit, p.207.

with the formation of the Colonial Society (later the Royal Colonial Institute), and the controversy over the Government loan to New Zealand. It was stimulated from the literary side by Charles Dilke's Greater Britain, (1868), J.A. Froude's Oceana, and J.R. Seeley's Expansion of England. It overflowed party barriers with the attachment of W.E. Forster and the Earl of Rosebery to the Imperial Federation League founded in 1884. Improved communications drew together the different parts of the Empire, - as one speaker said in 1892 of the Empire, - "...a vast outspread of English people drawn closer every year by steam and electricity." (1) A speaker at an Imperial Federation League meeting, marvelled at the fact that, "...in one of the remotest of our Welsh villages, in a tiny grocers shop, he found a tinned lobster which had come all the way from British Columbia." (2) Imperial federation involved a number of schemes for the political unification of the Empire, - none of which came near to realisation; they could be countered effectively by Imperialists who pointed to ties of sentiment, race and language. The other problem was the importance of Imperial trade in a period of frequent depressions and intensified foreign competition. Trade arguments were much more plausible in relation to the white colonies than when applied to Africa, though even here

(1) Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Annual Reports, 1892.

(2) Quoted in Commonweal, 1st February 1890.

with substantial British capital investments, the effect of the argument was somewhat marred by the colonial duties on British goods. One solution appeared to be the adoption of fair trade and preference for Imperial goods, but free trade doctrines were too strong for this idea to take much hold. This type of Imperialism put over by Rosebery to the Trade Union Congress in 1884, ⁽¹⁾ was innocuous and unimpeachable; it involved no contradictions with democracy since the colonies were self-governing, and no domination over alien races. It was easily absorbed by adherents of both political parties and it helped by making Imperialism acceptable, to pave the way for a new variety of expansion in Africa. Initially it was distinguished from Disraelian Imperialism, - characterised by the *Empress of India* title in 1876 which was distasteful to many Liberals, and by a foreign policy of force and aggression which by 1877 had blended with an Imperial outlook, in the confrontation between Britain and Russia on the Indian frontiers. The Liberal election campaign in 1880 focussed on a denunciation of an Imperialism identified with militarism and aggression. But by 1886 Imperialism could be considered as transcending party divisions. It was beginning to be thought "...that the old distinctions of parties is growing obsolete and that the real cleavage goes down deeper and is resolving itself more and more into one between "Imperialists and

(1) Trades Union Congress Reports, 1884, p.34.

Parochialists." (1) This feeling was considerably promoted by the Liberal split in 1886 over Irish Home Rule, - an Imperial issue centring on the important question of whether decentralization in the Empire was permissible, or whether it would result in disintegration. Even the remaining Liberal Party by 1892, was at odds over African expansion; Rosebery who, like the Conservatives, was prepared to accept certain commitments in Central Africa, found himself opposed to the old Gladstonian guard of Harcourt (a rival for the leadership of the party), and Morley. The concept of continuity in foreign policy developed, the idea that Imperial interests cut across party lines and were respected by statesmen of both parties. In the Boer War a full-blown Liberal Imperialism developed with an attitude to the war scarcely different from that of the Conservatives.

It was widely realised that in the last three decades of the century a general change of public opinion had taken place in relation to the value and importance of Empire in general. The Liberal G.P. Gooch traced the change - "The influence of W.E. Forster and Sir Charles Dilke among politicians, of Seeley among historians, the lofty exhortations of Tennyson followed by the emergence of Lord Rosebery and Mr. Chamberlain, the enthusiasm for the Queen revealed at the Jubilees and the change of opinion in the colonies themselves, together with the improvement of

(1) National Review, January 1886, pps. 651-8, "Parochialism or Imperialism" by an ex-Liberal M.P. p.652.

communications have made a gulf between the England of 1870 and the England of 1900." (1) A Liberal writer in 1899 nostalgically remembered the halcyon days of the mid-nineteenth century when, - "... the name of Arnold was still a living force in our English schools and the name of Mazzini was being whispered in every English home." The era of peace, economy and reform could be contrasted with the present "... universal scramble for plunder, for excitement, for amusement, for speculation, and above it all the flag of a hooligan Imperialism is raised with the proclamation that it is the sole mission of Anglo-Saxon England forgetful of the task of keeping its own drains in order, to expand and extend its boundaries indefinitely, and again, in the name of the Christianity it has practically abandoned, to conquer and inherit the earth." (2) W.E.H. Lecky referred to the "Great revolution of opinion which has taken place in England within the last few years about the real value to her both of her colonies and of her Indian Empire." (3) But along with enthusiasm for the colonies went a growing belief in further expansion of the

(1) The Heart of Empire, Op cit, p.309.

(2) Contemporary Review, 1899, op cit.

(3) W.E.H. Lecky, The Empire, its value and its growth, an inaugural address at the Imperial Institute, 20th November 1893, published 1893, pp.3-4.

Empire. The two often went together as in W.T. Stead who described his conversion to the new Imperialism, motivated by the desire to exert British influence in a positive direction, - "When in my teens I shrank from any extension of English authority over the dark skinned races of the world, but the experience of Fiji ⁽¹⁾ convinced me that it would be an abdication of duty for England to refuse to use her Imperial power for maintaining peace and putting down piracy and the slave trade among the dark skinned races of the world." ⁽²⁾

Awareness of the importance of Africa accelerated in the years 1884-5. J.E. Carlyle writing in 1885 commented "The subject of African colonies and colonization is now of general, almost of exciting interest. Africa has at last come to the forefront." ⁽³⁾ Lord Salisbury remarked, "When I left the Foreign Office in 1880, nobody thought of Africa. When I returned to it in 1885, the nations of Europe were almost quarelling with each other about the various portions of Africa they could obtain. I do not exactly know the cause of this sudden revolution, but

(1) Frederick Whyte, Life of W.T. Stead, London 1925, Vol 1, p.157.

(2) The Fiji Islands were annexed in 1874 as a result of the wishes of the local native leaders and the Australian colonists.

(3) J.E. Carlyle, African Colonies and Colonization, London 1885, p.2.

there it is." (1) The sudden interest appears to have been promoted by events in East and West Africa. The activities of King Leopold's International Association in the Congo had attracted some attention, especially in view of the campaign against Portuguese influence in the Congo, waged in England by commercial and philanthropic interests in 1883-4.⁽²⁾ English trading interests on the Niger epitomised by Sir George Goldie's National African Company, were beginning to come into conflict with the French. In 1884 Germany annexed the Cameroons and Angra Pequena in South-west Africa. The Berlin West Africa Conference in 1884-5, was the first of the agreements to partition Africa among the Powers. The Congo basin was divided between Portugal, France and the International Association, the Upper Niger placed under French control and Lower Niger allotted to Britain.⁽³⁾ In 1885 British pre-eminence at Zanzibar was being challenged by the Germans who declared a protectorate over a large section of East Africa. The result was the Anglo-German agreement in 1886 which divided the hinterland of East Africa into two spheres of influence, the Germans obtaining the southern half and the British the northern half.

(1) Quoted in Henry Russell, The ruin of the Soudan, London 1892, p.356.

(2) See below p.213 et seq.

(3) R. Robinson, J. Gallagher & A. Denny, Africa and the Victorians, the official mind of Imperialism, London 1965, p.176.

The Scramble for Africa was under way, though public awareness was at this stage largely confined to those groups and organisations, such as Geographical Societies or commercial concerns who could claim a specific interest. (1) The change in public opinion was apparent by 1886; the missionary John Mackenzie discovered that, "Public opinion is not where it was in 1883. The Radicals are now determined to have a colonial policy. Some of the old people remain on the old lines. I was planted alongside one of these at dinner, (at Bradford Liberal Club), and he went to business at once by asking did I think the English Government should protect every Englishman who went beyond our borders for his own profit..." Mackenzie's reply crystallised the new outlook; the question was no longer one of whether we should interfere in the African continent but, - "Was Africa to grow by peaceful and orderly means or by filibustering?" (2)

In South Africa at this time the choice was between varieties of Imperialism, - were new territories to be brought under direct Imperial control from London, or be administered indirectly by Cape Colonists or commercial companies. The former solution attracted the support of humanitarian groups, - missionary societies and the Aborigines Protection Society, who were

(1) For example references in the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, November 1884 & 8th June 1885.

(2) W.D. Mackenzie, John Mackenzie, South African Missionary and Statesman, London 1902, pps. 408-9.

concerned over the fate of the natives. From 1883 John Mackenzie of the London Missionary Society agitated for direct Imperial control of Bechuanaland as an alternative to annexation by the Cape Colony. A South Africa Committee was formed whose secretaries were H.O. Arnold Forster and A.H. Loring and which included besides representatives of humanitarian groups, both Liberals such as T.F. Buxton, Sidney Buxton, Chamberlain and Albert Grey, and Conservatives such as R.N. Fowler M.P. and the Earl of Shaftesbury. ⁽¹⁾ Liberals, even those who regarded themselves as anti-Imperialist, preferred responsible control by Imperial administrators (such as Lord Cromer in Egypt) to profiteering chartered companies or hard-headed colonialists. ⁽²⁾ In return Exeter Hall won the aversion of colonials and company promoters. The Committee opposed at first the granting of a charter to Rhodes's British South Africa Company, in 1889, but some of the Committee (such as Albert Grey who became a director of the Company) favoured the Rhodes scheme and the opposition disintegrated. ⁽³⁾ Mackenzie's type of humanitarian Imperialism was anti-colonialist and also anti-Boer (the Transvaal in 1884-5 was encroaching on native lands) but was also expansionist calling for a protectorate over Bechuanaland and an extension of Imperial authority to the Zambesi. The desire for expansion could be just as great among

(1) Ibid, p.401.

(2) Heart of Empire, op cit, p.341.

(3) W.D. Mackenzie, Op cit, p.426 et seq.

philanthropists as among freebooters.

Quite different was the type of Imperialism represented by Rhodes. The son of a clergyman, Cecil Rhodes joined his brother in Natal and was soon associated with diamond and gold mining projects. In 1880 he founded the de Beers Mining Company and in 1892 Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa on the Rand in the Transvaal. His most celebrated coup was the acquisition of mineral rights in Matabeleland from the chief Lobengula in 1888, which evolved into the chartered British South Africa Company with administrative rights over the vast territories south of the Zambesi. In addition he was a prominent Cape politician and in Britain in fact his Cape Colonial preferences led to his being regarded for a time as an anti-Imperialist. ⁽¹⁾ His grandiose ambition was to achieve an unbroken line of British territory from Egypt to the Cape. His philosophy was beautifully simple once the first premises had been accepted; he wrote in 1877, - "I contend that we are the first race in the world and that the more of the world we inherit the better it is for the human race. I contend that every acre added to our territory means the birth of more of the English race, who otherwise would not be brought into existence. Added to this the absorption of the greater part of the world under our rule simply means the end of all wars." ⁽²⁾

(1) Basil Williams, Life of Cecil Rhodes, London 1926.

(2) The last will and testament of C.J. Rhodes, edited by W.T. Stead, London 1902, pps. 58-9.

A good deal of Rhodes' Imperialism was based on beliefs of racial superiority. On the one hand he was concerned with practical commercial and financial schemes and on the other hand with a millennial plan for a secret society which would extend the Empire over a large area of the world. This was eventually modified into a more modest proposal for the Rhodes Oxford Scholarships which were to be allocated between South Africa, Australia, Canada, the West Indies and the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic nations of Germany and the United States. (None were available for India or Egypt where the coloured races were in a majority). The rules for the awarding of the scholarships show the priorities of an Imperialist; two thirds of the required points were to be allotted for the qualities of manhood, courage, leadership and character and prowess at athletics, - under a third for academic ability. (1)

There were a number of strands in Imperialist ideology - in relation to both old and new Imperialism. Some essentially practical arguments could be put forward. In the first place the colonies might provide a field for emigration, - a useful panacea for depression and unemployment at home. It was pointed out that "An emigrant may turn to any quarter of the globe he pleases, but still find himself a subject of Queen Victoria and

(1) Ibid, p.23 et seq.

a member of a great Empire." (1) Enthusiasm for emigration among working men and trades unionists reached its peak in the 1870's. Joseph Arch the agricultural workers' leader was especially partisan about emigration to the Empire, - on his return from Canada in 1873 he said "...if they've got to go, let them go to an English colony that they may be Englishmen still... I had many pressing invitations to go to the States before I went there, but as an Englishman I went first to that land where the British flag waves." (2) Some of the trades unions who advocated emigration for unemployed workers, officially discouraged emigration to countries outside the Empire, but most emigrants favoured the United States, with its possibilities for industrial employment, against the colonies which offered mainly agricultural work. (3) In practice the majority of emigrants did not heed Rosebery's exhortation, - "Do you wish that these kinsfolk and these friends of yours shall remain permanently associated with the fortunes of the Empire or whether they shall wander away to nations, however akin, who are not under the dominion of the British Crown." (4)

(1) T.H.S. Eacott, England, its people, politics and pursuits, London 1885, p.573.

(2) Joseph Arch, The Story of his life told by himself, London 1898, p. 200.

(3) Population Studies, 1949, pps. 248-273, Charlotte Erickson, "The encouragement of emigration by British Trades Unions 1880-1900."

(4) Trades Union Congress Reports, 1884, p.34.

But by the 1880's enthusiasm for emigration was declining. Arch claimed in 1898 (probably as an afterthought) - "...I only looked upon emigration as a disagreeable necessity, not as a thing to be recommended." (1) Reports were received that the U.S.A. and the colonies were also suffering from trade depressions, which would only be aggravated by an influx of labour from Europe. At the Trades Union Congress in 1886 an anti-emigration proposal was passed by eighty-seven votes to eleven. A representative of Sheffield Trades Council suggested that land reform might come before a state aided emigration scheme and Arch, to cheers, wondered if money spent on foreign wars might not be better spent in reforms at home to create a greater consumer demand for British products. (2) Thus in the era of Imperialism, emigration was no longer very popular as a remedy for depression. There was signs of a preference for an insular plan of social reform to the glories of an overseas Empire.

To some extent promotion of emigration was replaced by hostility to immigration into England, - mainly by Jews from Central and Eastern Europe. From 1888 onwards the T.U.C. in most years passed resolutions calling for the curtailment of alien pauper immigration, which it was claimed, depressed the wages of

(1) Joseph Arch, Op cit, p.219.

(2) Trades Union Congress Reports, 1886.

British workmen. (1) Another point raised was the lack of Union participation by the immigrants, who often worked in the sweated trades such as tailoring, - "...though they did not seem to earn any wages, they often in a short time were able to set up in business for themselves, (laughter)." (2) Some of the antipathy appeared to be on racial grounds, - a shared prejudice with the main-stream Imperialists; Keir Hardie remarked in 1888, of aliens in the Ayrshire ironworks, - "These Poles lived together eight or ten in a single room and led what could only be described as a beastly life." (3) Racial feelings had penetrated fairly deeply by the end of the century, - the anti-Imperialists inveighed against the Jewish speculators and financiers.

The emigration argument was not relevant to Africa, which could provide, except for South Africa and the Rand mines, a home only for a handful of administrators, soldiers, missionaries and a few traders. Edward Beesly wrote correctly in the Positivist Review, "Do the advocates of "pegging our claims" in Central Africa expect to gain the workman's vote by telling him that they are providing him with a place to overflow into? He has no desire to overflow into Central Africa,....He goes to temperate regions,-

(1) Trades Union Congress Reports, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1892, 1894, 1895.

(2) Ibid., 1894.

(3) Ibid., 1888.

mostly to the United States ... the English who go to such places as Uganda are not workmen but middle class adventurers ... They go to make the black men work, to sweat the labour of black men, where they will not be harrassed by Trades Union." (1)

A more persuasive argument for African expansion was the prospect of economic gain. Africa could be regarded as a source of raw materials and as an area for investment, - especially in South African gold and diamond mines, but it was mainly seen as a market for British goods. From the 1870's onwards it was felt that British trade was increasingly coming under pressure from German and American competition, intensified by tariffs against British goods. Lecky put a typical view, - "It is beginning to be clearly seen that with a vast, redundant over growing population, with our enormous manufactures and our utterly insufficient supply of home grown food, it is a matter of life and death to the nation and especially to its working classes, that there should be secure and extending fields open to our goods, and in the present condition of the world we must mainly look for these fields within our own Empire." (2)

Joseph Chamberlain was an ardent advocate of new markets as a cure for unemployment; during the House of Commons debate on Uganda in 1893 he declared in reply to a Radical critic "Does

(1) Positivist Review, April 1893.

(2) W.E.H. Lecky, Op cit, pp.12-13.

my Honourable friend believe if it were not for the gigantic foreign trade that has been created by this policy of expansion, that we could subsist in this country in any kind of way?" (1)

He compared the prospects of Ugandan trade with those of Cambia fifty years previously. If Britain had not followed an expansionist policy, - "...the greater part of the continent of Africa would have been occupied by our commercial rivals who would have proceeded as the first act of their policy to close this great potential market to British trade." (2)

Africa appeared to be exactly the gigantic new market desired by British industry. James Hutton urged the Manchester Chamber of Commerce on the Congo, - "It was to the extension of our trade in such underdeveloped markets, that Manchester must look for some relief from the present unsatisfactory state of trade." (3)

To Carlyle "Africa...seems to offer a new and wide field for consumption." (4)

An early example of this conviction was given in a paper on "Central Africa as a market for British trade" presented to the 1879 Trades Union Congress by a Mr. James Bradshaw a Manchester merchant. He asserted that "...the great continent

(1) Quoted in J. Chamberlain, Foreign and Colonial speeches, London 1897, p.114.

(2) Ibid, p.144.

(3) J.E. Carlyle, Op cit, p.11.

(4) Chamber of Commerce Journal, 10th October 1884.

might not only become our chief outlet for manufactures and a great field for railway and steamship development, but also prove a reservoir for supplying all sorts of raw material for manufactures and our chief ground for food." (1) He suggested "a powerful African trading corporation" with shares of £1 each to enable the working classes to take part. Bradshaw's blueprint fits into the general interest shown in Africa by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, - stimulated by James Hutton who was a close supporter of the Congo International Association. Bradshaw also, in suggesting a railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria in East Africa, appeared to be aware of the plans of William Mackinnon (a Scottish friend of Hutton) for an East African Concession. He did not win much approval at the T.U.U. There was some support from Lancashire representatives from the Weavers Union and Carpenters and Joiners Union, but most delegates were against the scheme - mainly on moral grounds, - a representative of Leicester Boot and Shoe workers "...had a decided antipathy to annexation when it meant taking other people's territories (hear hear)" and a painter and decorator from London wanted to know, - "How could this scheme be accomplished except by the edge of the sword?" (2)

(1) Trades Union Congress Report, 1879 p.31, et seq.

(2) Ibid.

There were some areas of profitable trade in Africa, mainly on the West coast, in which Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow merchants were concerned, but many of the claims made for African trade were wildly optimistic. Tropical Africa was strictly a potential market. By 1900 Africa was never more than a very minor contributor to British trade.

An important ingredient in Imperialist sentiment was the belief in British racial superiority, not only over coloured races but over the Latin races in Europe. North Americans could be included in the Anglo-Saxon culture, and Teutonic Germans might grudgingly be allowed a certain measure of importance. The finer points of racial definition were judiciously argued, - for instance by J.A. Cramb during the Boer War - "In the sense that they are Teutons, the Dutch are of the same stock as the English; but the characteristics of the Batavian are not those of the Jute, the Viking and the Norsemen. The best blood of the Teutonic race for six centuries went to the making of England." (1) Liberal critics confirmed the importance of race in the Imperialist ideology, - J.G. Godard defined Imperialism as "predominance of race". (2) The prevailing attitudes were summed up by Chamberlain speaking in 1895, -

(1) J.A. Cramb, The origins and destiny of Imperial Britain, London 2nd edition 1915, p.100.

(2) J.G. Godard, Racial supremacy, being studies in Imperialism, London 1905, pps. 4-5.

See also J.M. Robertson, Patriotism and Empire, London 1899, p.173.

"I believe in the British Empire, and in the second place I believe in the British race. I believe that the British race is the greatest of governing races that the world has ever seen." (1) And by a Church of England clergyman in 1897, -

"I especially believe in men of my own kin. They are a royal people; the masterful, noble people, "the lords of human kind", they rule by right divine on every land and sea." (2)

Racial ties were a basis for colonial federation, - as Lecky put it, - "...how unspeakably important it is to the future of the world, that the English race, through the ages that are to come should cling as closely as possible together." (3) The Americans were included with the British as "the highest type of human being." (4)

Chamberlain advocated an Anglo-American alliance, and there was a good deal of support for American Imperialism during the American-Spanish War of 1898; the links between the two nations were illustrated by a tableau at the Lord Mayor's Show in the shape of a ship, - "Britannia stood on the deck clasping the hand

(1) Chamberlain, Foreign and Colonial Speeches, p.89.

(2) Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Annual Reports, 1897.

(3) W.E.H. Lecky, On cit, p.15.

(4) Nineteenth Century, February 1899, pps. 216-225, H.F. Wyatt, "War as a test of national value." p.218.

of Columbia, while atop the whole structure waved the union jack and the stars and stripes. " (1)

Linked with race was the prevailing conviction of the "laws" of evolution, - "The best specimens of a race, whether among men, pigeons, orchids or horses, are only to be found where the laws of breeding and of culture are carefully obeyed." (2) The struggle between species was used as a justification for Imperialism, - "The struggle for existence is a universal fact; the primary fact we may say, throughout the whole realm of animated nature, which to the eye of science is an incessant battlefield of individual against individual, of species against species." (3) In this perpetual conflict the British as the superior race would logically overcome the weaker races, "Feeble races are being wiped off the earth and the few great incipient species arm themselves against each other." (4) Lord Salisbury elaborated this theory in 1898, - "You may roughly divide the nations of the world into the living and the dying....the weak states are becoming weaker and the strong states are becoming stronger.... the living nations will

(1) J.A.S. Grenville, Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy, the close of the nineteenth century, London 1964, p.215.

(2) Arnold White, Efficiency and Empire, London 1901, p.73.

(3) Fortnightly Review, October 1900, W.S. Lilly, "The burden of Empire", pps. 533-43. p.335.

(4) Saturday Review, February 1896, pps. 118-120, A biologist, "A biological view of our foreign policy." p.119.

gradually encroach on the territory of the dying..." (1) It was felt that the rule of great Empires would replace the myriad of small nationalities; this feeling was perhaps promoted by the consolidation of large states in Europe with the emergence of the German Empire and Italian unification. The theory was further refined by the notion that evolutionary struggle equalled progress and was therefore an indisputably good thing, - "Unless the vigorous nation or race can continue as throughout history to expand and grow stronger at the expense of the decaying nation or race, the fundamental condition of human advance will not be fulfilled, and a state of stagnancy ending in social death, will be substituted for a state of progress." (2)

In practice this meant that war was a necessary element in progress - "If at any given period in the past, war could have been abolished...social evolution must have been arrested, because the only practicable means of effecting change among nations and states would have been removed." (3)

If Britain refused an Imperial destiny the only alternative would be the status of a fourth class power, to be classed with the weak, decaying nations instead of with the strong, - "To be a second Holland or a greater Britain, - such seems to be the

(1) J.A.S. Grenville, Op cit, pps. 165-6.

(2) Nineteenth Century, February 1899, pps. 216-225, H.F. Wyatt, "War as a test of national value" p.222.

(3) Ibid, p.218.

alternative before England." (1) The smaller nations such as Spain, Switzerland and Belgium, were "...domesticated species, living by the grace of their stronger neighbours, under artificial conditions." (2) The social Darwinist ideas associated with the writings of Carl Pearson and Benjamin Kidd, (3) had been absorbed by a good many Imperialists by the end of the century. A writer in the Saturday Review in 1896 constructed a complete analysis of foreign policy on the basis of evolutionary theories. "The foreign policies of the nations, so far as they are not the mere expression of the individual ambitions of rulers...are anticipation of, and provision for, struggles for existence between the incipient species." (4) A biological view of foreign policy involved federation of the colonies to unify the Anglo-Saxon race; unlike Chamberlain the writer thought that the great struggles of the future would be fought with the rival Empires of Germany and the U.S.A.

Racial theories led to views on social questions. An Imperial race must be strong and healthy and this ideal implied some improvement of conditions among the working class, which in turn presupposed efficient and well-organised government. Racial

(1) T.H.S. Escott, Op cit, p.586.

(2) Saturday Review, February 1896, op cit, p.119.

(3) Bernard Semmel, Imperialism and Social Reform, London 1960, ch.2.

(4) Saturday Review, February 1896, op cit, pps. 119-120.

deterioration was noticed in the Boer War when a number of volunteers were rejected on physical grounds. The problem was stated by Arnold White in 1901, - "Our species is being propagated and continued, increasingly from undersized street-bred people... The Empire will not be maintained by a nation of out-patients."⁽¹⁾ He held extreme and tough-minded views on genetics, thinking that a certificate of physical and mental fitness should be required before marriage, and that charity merely prolonged the unsatisfactory existence of the more incompetent members of the species, who must be discouraged from breeding; he was also known to be anti-Jewish. He concluded - "The production of sound minds in healthy, athletic and beautiful bodies is a form of patriotism which must be revived."⁽²⁾ Racial views percolated into Robert Blatchford's brand of Socialism. Like Arnold White he deplored the destruction of British agriculture and the depopulation of the invigorating countryside; he thought "... today the British race is in danger of deteriorating because of the greed of money seekers and the folly of rulers, and of those who claim to teach."⁽³⁾

Anti-Imperialists took pains to refute social darwinism.

(1) Arnold White, Op cit, p.100.

(2) Ibid, p.121.

(3) R. Blatchford, Britain for the British, London 1902, p.19.

J.A. Hobson and D.G. Ritchie argued that military and physical struggle had been superseded by a higher contest of intellect, - a struggle between rival ideas and theories. (1) But Hobson was careful to retain all the ingredients of evolutionary theory, - "All the essentials of the biological struggle for life are retained, the incentive to individual vigour, the intensity of the struggle, the elimination of the unfit and the survival of the fittest." (2)

The inferiority of coloured races was taken for granted - as H.A.C. Cairns pointed out, (3) evolutionary theories ensured that African natives were seen as "contemporary ancestors" as grown-up children lower down the evolutionary scale than the white races. Even a Liberal anti-Imperialist such as G.P. Gooch regarded natives as "...impressionable children of nature." (4) There was no attempt at cultural relativity or evaluation of tribal society on its own merits, - it was accepted that the norms of Victorian society must be imposed on Africa. Natives must be firmly ruled, "...however good they may be, they must as a people, be ruled with a hand of iron in a velvet glove; and if

(1) J.A. Hobson, Imperialism, a study, London 3rd edition 1938, p.187 et seq.

D. G. Ritchie, Darwinism and Politics, London 2nd edition 1895, p.22 et seq.

(2) J.A. Hobson, Op cit, p.189.

(3) H.A.C. Cairns, Prelude to Imperialism, British reactions to Central African Society 1840-1890, London 1965.

(4) The heart of Empire, op cit, p.361.

they writhe under it, and don't understand the force of it, it is of no use to add more padding, - you must take off the glove for a moment and show them the hand." (1) Native character fitted into certain stereotypes, - childishness, laziness, untruthfulness or faithfulness - commonly epitomized for example by Livingstone's porters who carried his body back to the coast. A typical view was expressed by Lord Wolseley during the Ashanti War on the Gold Coast in 1873, - "The negroes are like so many monkeys; they are a lazy, good for nothing race, no matter what Exeter Hall may say to the contrary." (2) In fact the most noted representatives of the Exeter Hall tradition believed in the establishment of the norms of Victorian industrialisation in Africa, - the missionary John Mackenzie aimed to "supersede the communistic relations of the members of a tribe among one another, in the fresh, stimulating breath of healthy individualistic competition." (3) It was considered that natives should be encouraged to take up wage labour on plantations and farms, - as Lady Lugard wrote - "...is it enough that natives in the less civilized portion of the tropics should have been

(1) Colonel R.S.S. Baden Powell, The Matabele Campaign, London 1897, p.64.

(2) The letters of Lord and Lady Wolseley, edited by Sir George Arthur, London 1922, p.10.

(3) W.D. Mackenzie, Op cit, p.451.

relieved of the necessity of labouring for others ? (by the abolition of the slave trade) Is it not desirable that they should take the further step of learning to labour for themselves." (1)

The harsh tones of racial superiority were softened by a genuine feeling that British civilization should be extended for the benefit of the world at large; this was almost identical with the spread of Christianity. Hobson recognised the important moral element in Imperialism, - "There exists in a considerable, though not large proportion of the British nation, a genuine desire to spread Christianity among the heathen...and to do good work about the world in the cause of humanity." (2) A writer in 1900 defined the *raison d'être* of the British Empire "...not for the sake of fortune to individuals or even of glory to the nation, but for the sake of civilization, - in other words for the diffusion of peace and justice over regions where these blessings have hitherto been unknown." (3) Many Imperialists felt that Empire could only be justified with reference to "...our noble, civilizing and elevating mission.." (4) The white man's burden

(1) The Empire and the century, a series of essays on Imperial problems and possibilities by various writers, London 1905, p.820.

(2) J.A. Hobson, Op cit, pps. 196-7.

(3) Fortnightly Review, 1900 op cit, p. 265.

(4) United Services Magazine, November 1899, pps. 137-141, Rev. Philip Young, "Is war allowable?" p.138.

was taken very seriously by missions, - Lord Cranborne announced to the Church Missionary Society centenary meeting in 1899, - "Gentlemen we are proud of our Empire..Sometimes we almost tremble at the weight of responsibility which is upon us, and sometimes we view with a certain shrinking, the necessary bloodshed which the expansion of Empire involves. Can it be justified? Can this burden of responsibility be defended? Only upon one consideration: only because we believe that by the genius of our people and by the purity of our religion, we are able to confer benefits upon those subject populations greater than it has been given by God to any other nation to afford; and it is only because we know that in the train of the British Government comes the preaching of the Church of Christ, that we are able to defend the Empire of which we are so proud." (1)

There was immense satisfaction in the progress brought by British rule. Chamberlain remarked, "What is wanted for Uganda is what Birmingham has got, - an improvement scheme." (2) A visitor to the Sudan was delighted at the transformation - "Now at Assouan the Nile is tamed. A palace, college, hotels and bungalows have usurped the mud heaps of Khartoum; the sudd has yielded to the white man's will and steamers pant fortnightly past Lado Fort; bullock wagons astonish the rhinoceros of Wadelai;

(1) E. Stock, History of the Church Missionary Society, its environment, its men and its work, London 1899, Vol 4, p.8.

(2) J. Chamberlain, Foreign and Colonial Speeches, p.136.

prospecters are chipping rocks on Rurwenzori's flanks; and the German scientist is hunting bugs on Karissimbi's slopes." (1)

The sense of a civilizing mission was associated with a feeling of special destiny, - "The regeneration of a continent has been committed to our hands and we must strive to prove worthy of the high and holy mission entrusted to us." (2) As early as 1877 Edward Dicey was asserting that Englishmen had a "manifest destiny" to found Empires. (3) A writer in the National Review, in 1886, referred to "...the great task Providence has assigned to it (the British Empire) of carrying the commerce, colonization and civilization of an English-speaking race over the whole earth." (4) The idea of Providence gave Empire a peculiarly religious justification, - Cardinal Vaughan stated in a sermon during the Boer War, "This Empire has been raised up by the same Providence that called the Roman Empire into existence, and as God used the one towards the attainment of his own divine purposes of mercy, so does he seem to be using the other." (5) The Bishop of Hereford

(1) The Empire and the Century, op cit, p.809.

(2) A.L. Bruce, Came to Cairo or Britain's sphere of influence in Africa, Edinburgh, 1892, p.46.

(3) Nineteenth Century, September 1877, pps. 292-308, E. Dicey, "Mr. Gladstone and our Empire".

(4) National Review, January 1886, op cit, p.658.

(5) War against War, 29th December 1899.

affirmed, "...where there was a progressive and imperial people its faith was Protestant." (1) Through its missionary interests and belief in a God-given Empire, religion was specially associated with Imperialist sentiment.

Along with racial views went a belief in the special colonizing abilities of the British people and its particular suitability for the mission granted to it. A writer in 1899 spoke of the "...British secret of governing inferior races at a distance, with justice and firmness and with the smallest possible exercise of military power." (2) It was thought that "Colonization is an art in which the Englishman excels beyond all comparison." (3) This view even spread to the columns of the usually anti-expansionist Nonconformist and Independent, in a letter which asserted "...if ever there was an Imperial people in the world, we English are an Imperial people;" (4) The view was often combined with denigration of the colonial aptitudes of foreigners, - "Frenchmen are about the least successful colonists in the world." (5)

(1) Pall Mall Gazette, 29th September 1898.

(2) Quarterly Review, January 1899, pps. 241-265, "Democracy and Foreign affairs".

(3) Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Annual Reports, 1889.

(4) 6th January 1881.

(5) Echo, 14th August 1884.

Pride in Empire was illustrated by frequent reference to its size and extent. Writers measured the Empire quantitatively as well as in terms of its moral qualities. It was common to speak of the ten million square miles, one fifth of the habitable globe and one third of the world's population which were under British rule. (1) A few days after the German telegram supporting the Boers after the Jameson Raid, Chamberlain responded "Queensland has an area which, shall we say ? is three times greater than the German Empire (laughter and cheers)" (2)

Imperialism had a strong military element. It was associated with admiration for the strong man, for force and for war. John Morley described the spirit of 1895 as a eulogy on "...the virtues of the strong man and the Hero for Ruler ... a subtle tendency to deify violence, will, force and even war. It was the day of Bismarck." (3) Imperialism was seen as "...an attempt to place action above speculation on the one side, and above materialism on the other side." (4) W.A.S. Hewins, the tariff reformer wrote "I found the inspiration I wanted, not in the writings of economists, but at that time in those of Charles

(1) T.H.S. Escott, Op cit, p.571.

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Annual Report 1897.

(2) Joseph Chamberlain, Foreign and Colonial Speeches, p.96.

(3) John Viscount Morley, Recollections, New York 1917, Vol 2, p.48

(4) Fortnightly Review, 1900, op cit, p.268.

Kingsley, Ruskin and Carlyle." (1) These were the exponents of force and authority. Yearning for action and adventure was expressed in popular literature, - "...the concurrence of patriotism and imperialism in the ethic, with gory sensationalism in the subject matter, of the prevailing type of fiction. Not subtlety, but stimulation, not character but adventure, not psychology, but the shedding of blood, not thought, but bustle and excitement, are the requirements today met by two English fictionists out of three." (2)

Imperialism was connected with the craze for sports and athleticism. W.S. Blunt in 1899 deplored "the militarism and brutalities of the day, the idealization of football and all games of force, the rehabilitation of Napoleon and other war making scoundrels..." (3) A writer in the Westminster Review on the attractions of Imperial debates in Parliament wrote, - "A member who could, or would, talk only to his constituents...of domestic reforms would be voted a terribly dull kind of bore. Popular contests of sport generally wind up with fireworks; and are not politics of the nature of

(1) W.A.S. Hewins, The Apologia of an Imperialist, forty years of Empire policy, London 1929, p.15.

(2) J.M. Robertson, Op cit, p.68.

(3) W.S. Blunt, My Diaries, being a personal narrative of events 1888-1914, London 1919, Vol 1, p.391.

sport among an essentially sporting people?" (1) Another writer asserted, - "That Imperialism is allied to, and has been fostered by the recent British delight in athleticism is as certain as that it is a passionate and yet philosophic protest for nationalism as a force in the life of the world.." (2) Aggression which was an important ingredient of Imperialism was linked with sporting instincts, - "The hatred of being beaten is deeply rooted in the British working man. It shows itself in the intense interest excited by the rivalry between one team and another in open air games.." (3) L. T. Hobhouse despaired at the prevailing mood, - "No social revolution will come from a people so absorbed in cricket and football." (4)

Imperialism and militarism were inextricably associated. The period from 1884 was marked by an increase in naval and military spending. Critics of Empire declared, "The very word Empire is in history and essence military; emperor means soldier;

(1) Westminster Review, June 1900, op cit.

(2) Fortnightly Review 1900 op cit. p. 268.

(3) Quarterly Journal, January 1899, op cit.

(4) L.T. Hobhouse, Democracy and Reaction, London 1909, p.78.

all modern history and traditions associate empires with war." (1)

The examples of the Roman Empire and the more recent French Empire were relevant here. There was no doubt that "It is

the age of big battalions and colonial armaments and the arbiter of Europe is he who is the master of many legions...

The military spirit was never stronger in England than it is today." (2) War became not only justifiable but admirable

and inevitable; J.A. Cramb defined war "...as a phase in the life-effort of the state towards complete self-realization." (3)

Clergymen found Biblical support for war, - from the Old Testament, -

and decided, "There are some wars which are God's wars..." "Well

done thou good and faithful servant" may be as applicable to

the heroes of our wars as to the devoted followers of their

Lord." (4) War was seen as a positive advantage, "It is a

promoter of the hardier and more manly virtues; it teaches

endurance, self-control, obedience, contempt of danger and of

death; it is the origin of every fountain head of honour...

(1) Morley, Op cit, p.80.

(2) T.H.S. Escott, Op cit, p.584.

(3) J.A. Cramb, Op cit, p.121.

(4) United Services Magazine, November 1899, op cit, pps. 139-141.

The prestige of war-like deeds is one of the most valued inheritances of nations and its loss is a sure symptom of the degeneracy of a race, a precursor of the decadence of a people." (1)

Boys Brigades reflected the importance attached to the military ethos. These para-military organisations linked religion and militarism firmly together. There were two main brigades, - one attached largely to the Scottish Presbyterian Churches, founded in Glasgow in 1884, (2) and one started in 1891 by a member of the Church of England Junior Temperance Society. (3)

The Imperial catastrophe of Khartoum had resulted in a Gordon Boy's Brigade being set up in Liverpool in 1885. It was noticeable that neither the English nor Scottish Nonconformist Churches were very much interested in brigades, & nor did they share most of the Imperial sentiments of the time. By 1898 the English Church Lads Brigade had over one thousand companies and the Scottish Boys Brigade over eight hundred. Meetings were a combination of drill and hymn singing and the Brigades aimed to cultivate those qualities most admired by the Imperialists. The objects of the Scottish brigade were "...the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys and the promotion of habits of obedience,

(1) United Service Magazine, October 1898, Major General H.M. Bengough, "The ethics of war."

(2) Boys Brigade Gazette, March 1889.

(3) Church Lads' Brigade, Reports, 1891-2.

reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness." (1) The regime was partly modelled on that of a public school - "... the Brigade aims at giving them something hitherto denied them, - something of the free discipline, the manly games, the opportunities of wholesome society which a Public School gives." (2) These qualities are very similar to those given pride of place in the Rhodes Scholarships. The literature and speeches of the Brigade emphasised the importance of a strong navy and army; religion and militarism were perfectly united in the aim of one clergyman, - "We must present Jesus Christ to Boys as their hero." (3)

There were not only boys brigades in Sunday Schools but "... cadet battalions among working boys, cadet corps in private and public schools, of poor boys in industrial schools, of telegraph messengers in the Post Office..." (4) Conscription which was being urged in the armed services periodicals, was regarded by Radicals as a dangerous menace, - as Blunt wrote "There is much talk in England of conscription for the army, and our people will soon begin to understand that they

(1) Boys Brigade Gazette, June 1892.

(2) Church Lads' Brigade Reports, 1896-7.

(3) Boys Brigade Gazette, April 1891.

(4) Nonconformist and Independent, 23rd December 1892.

can't have the armaments of Empire without paying the price." (1)
 Even Socialists made their own contribution to militarism by advocating a citizen army. Justice urged, - "Volunteers should consist of the whole male population trained from childhood to the use of arms as a portion of their education....It is the right course for every Socialist to join the Volunteers. No man can be the worse for knowing how to defend his country, - when he gets possession of it." (2)

Attempts to inculcate the population with a military ethos were backed by a feeling that the mass of the people had indeed declared in favour of Imperialist expansion. There had been some speculation as to how the new electorate of 1885 would react, - Radicals believed that their sympathies would lie with Gladstonianism, - "...there seemed to be some reason to believe that the great democratic infusion into the voting body would bring about a tendency to accept a reading of international ethics which would alter the tradition of British Foreign Policy in an altruistic sense, while underating the requirements of national security and dignity." (3) But democracy appeared to have given its approval to Imperialism; it could not be denied that "The

(1) W.S. Blunt, My Diaries, op cit, p.351.

(2) Justice, 11th April 1885.

(3) Quarterly Journal, January 1899, op cit, p.242.

tone of Empire is to be heard everywhere now, strong, clear and unmistakeable, and it has grown and spread and obtained its mastery during the reign of household suffrage." (1) This opinion was reinforced by the Conservative return to power in 1900, which disproved the notion that the parties would alternate in government. Prophecies followed as to the demise of the Liberal Party and it was triumphantly asserted that "The "street-bred people" who know no more of England than that they only England know, are as right as Mr. Kipling in their Imperial instinct." (2)

The move away from free trade Liberalism was contemporaneous with the Imperial revival and was identified with it. In fact for the greater part of the time the mass of voters were more concerned with domestic than with Imperial matters; and more with the immediate Imperial question of the union with Ireland than with far off Africa. Interest in tropical Africa for instance was almost wholly confined to a few minority pressure groups. Some attempts were made to imperialise the working man. The Primrose League a Disraelian cult, founded by the Fourth Party in 1883, put Imperialism high in its priorities, equal to preserving the

(1) Ibid.

(2) Fortnightly Review, November 1900, Edward Dicey, "The downfall of Liberalism" pp.803-14.

constitution and established Church. By a mixture of propaganda and entertainment it attracted some working class members, mainly in agricultural regions or in small towns. (1) In areas of urban working class Conservatism such as Lancashire, working men's clubs had a diet of lectures, speeches and lantern slides on Empire. There were some lecturers like the pamphleteer Charles Marvin who saw their mission, "...to Imperialise the working man" He says, "The working man has the largest vote and the welfare of the Empire is largely in his keeping." His object in life is to create a consciousness of Empire in his mind.." (2) Imperialism went with Conservative ideology, and was accepted by Conservatives as a matter of course, - though as a vague background to domestic matters, for most of the time.

At the same time a number of anti-Imperialist theories developed. The Socialist analysis was the most far reaching and best worked out. Socialists tended to relate Imperialist expansion directly to the needs of British capitalism. The aims of Imperialism were commercial, - to acquire a larger share of the world market and make profitable investments of capital. (3) The civilizing mission theme was hypocrisy, - slavery would be

(1) Janet H. Robb, The Primrose League, 1883-1906,

(2) Charles Marvin, English Africa, shall Boer and German sway it? London 1887, quoted in preface from Newcastle Examiner.

(3) Commonweal, February 1885.

replaced by wage slavery and forced labour. Imperialism would benefit only a small section of the population but the most significant question was whether Africa could be seen "...as a possible source of new life for dying capitalism..." Belfort Bax developed this theme in 1888; he thought the opening up of Africa meant "untold mineral, vegetable and animal wealth, placed at the disposal of the modern commercial system; a new world of markets; limitless cheap labour; practically boundless territories for emigration etc. etc....I do not wish to be pessimistic...when I confess the dread possibility does present itself to me occasionally, of the capitalistic world taking a new lease of life out of the exploitation of Africa." (1) This view shared with the most ardent Imperialists an optimistic assessment of Africa's commercial potentialities. It was taken up in Justice in 1892, - the opening up of Africa "really means...the granting of a renewed lease of life to capitalism visibly coming to the end of ^{its} ~~its~~ tether in the civilized world and its already settled colonies." (2) To break up the Empire then, would involve the accelerated disintegration of the capitalist system. Socialists did not theorise much further than this, and the typical statements denouncing, "...Jewish financiers who make others burn their fingers that they may clip more coupons; capitalists and shareholders

(1) Ibid, 28th June 1888.

(2) Justice, 3rd December 1892.

who want big dividends to be earned at the expense of the nation; manufacturers who want to sell bad gin and sweat-made shoddy articles to ignorant niggers;" (1) Like Liberals, Socialists also condemned Imperialism on moral grounds; Socialist internationalism was important here, - "For the Socialist the word frontier does not exist...Race-pride and class-pride are, from the standpoint of Socialism involved in the same condemnation." (2)

The Liberal opposition to Imperialism rested on a contention that Imperialism conflicted with the basic assumptions and aims of Liberalism. In the first place Empire was regarded by its authoritarian nature as incompatible with liberty and democracy. This was especially applicable to the dependencies of Africa and the East, - "...when we speak of an English Empire.. we are using words which have nothing to do with Liberalism, for we are substituting Roman ideas for Greek. ...we are holding lands as our dominions by force of arms, without asking their consent;" (3) Hobhouse put the point succinctly, - "Democratic Imperialism is a contradiction...For democracy is the government of the people by itself. Imperialism is government of one people by another." (4)

(1) Pioneer, a magazine for Midland Socialists, July 1899.

(2) Commonweal, February 1885.

(3) New Century Review, March 1900, pps. 323-330, A.E.T. Newman, "Liberal Imperialists" p.324.

(4) L.T. Hobhouse, Op cit, p.149.

Empire was also seen as the antithesis of social reform at home. The argument here was that funds were diverted abroad, which could be spent at home. Henry Labouchere a veteran anti-Imperialist said, "I have always objected to all these Protectorates and annexations and I mean to do so as long as I am in the House..We have want and misery here, and if we have money to spend it is taken from the mass of the people; let it be spent on the well being of the mass of the people." (1) And the Reynolds News, "We cannot tackle old age pensions while we are spending the needful money on armaments. We shall be indifferent to the crying evils of our land system, while we are grabbing land thousands of miles away. We shall think little of equality of political rights at home while we are shooting down coloured men abroad.." (2) This was a denial of the Imperialists' contention that new territories brought economic benefits to Britain. Radicals thought "This new fangled political creed consists in swagger abroad and inaction at home..." (3) Joseph Arch considered that the rewards of the new Imperialism were negligible, -"Who is to find the £25,000,000 which has been expended by the Government in blood and murder? What will England benefit by the Afghan War and

(1) Quoted in Hesketh Pearson Labby, the life of Henry Labouchere, London 1936, p.174.

(2) Reynolds News, 5th February 1899.

(3) A. Thorold, Life of Henry Labouchere, London 1913, p.130.

what will we get from the Zulu campaign except a large elephant's tusk?" (1) Critics had a poor opinion of the burden of Empire, - "every expansion implies a larger area to administer and wider frontiers to guard." In addition there was increased danger of war with rival Imperialist powers.

But equally central to the anti-Imperialist position were moral arguments. Imperialism appeared contrary to respect for the rights of other nations. (2) A lecturer in working men's clubs found, "...whenever opposition has been manifested....doubt, real or affected of the morality of Empire has been put forward as a part of the ground of objection." (3) The typical argument ran, - "The British Empire is simply the result of a long course of fraud and robbery. Just as a man picks pockets or robs on the highway, so have the people of Britain during generations past, been filching or violently robbing the lands of other nations." (4) Imperialism was identified with "...a tremendous decline in the sense of honour and justice in this country." (5)

(1) Joseph Arch, Op cit, p.315.

(2) Hirst, Murray and Hammond, Op cit, p.165.

(3) Nineteenth Century, April 1897, op cit, p.520.

(4) Ibid.

(5) James Bryce MSS. Bodleian Library, South African War Box, H.Russell to Bryce 28th December 1899.

It was thought that "During the last twenty-five years, that is since the rise of the Imperialist school, our moral standard has been steadily lowered: policy has been put before righteousness."⁽¹⁾

Labouchere summed up the moral condemnation of Imperialism, "In fact we are the most thoroughgoing bucanears and land grabbers that ever existed...I assert that Africa belongs to the Africans.. and we have no more right to the interior of Africa than had any other country on the globe."⁽²⁾ The anti-Imperialists clung to non-intervention as the basis of their views.

The Imperialist replied "The question is not whether we were right in undertaking all it involves, but how best we shall perform it."⁽³⁾ As Dicey said of India "...we have got it and intend to keep it..."⁽⁴⁾ Imperialism had come to mean expansion wherever possible, - Chamberlain laid down the Imperial position, "I and those who agree with me have also a policy, and I believe in the expansion of the Empire; and we are not ashamed to confess that we have that belief."⁽⁵⁾

(1) New Century Review, March 1900, op cit, p.328.

(2) Hesketh Pearson, Op cit, p.175.

(3) Fortnightly Review, August 1900, pps. 177-187, J.H. Muirhead, "What Imperialism means." p. 183.

(4) Nineteenth Century, September 1877, op cit.

(5) Chamberlain, Foreign and Colonial Speeches, op cit, p.117.

Midlothian principles and the first Boer War, 1880-1881.

The themes of pro- and anti- Imperialism were rehearsed in 1881 on the occasion of the "...clash between a liberal, multi-racial Imperialism and a racialist republicanism." (1) The Boers in the Transvaal had been given their independence in 1854 at the Sand River Convention but from the 1860's onwards it was considered desirable for Imperial security in South Africa that the Republics should be federated with Cape and Natal Colonies. To British statesmen the Cape was important as a route to India and the East. The opportunity to absorb the Transvaal occurred in 1877 when the Boers were threatened with defeat by native tribes; Lord Carnarvon the Colonial Secretary ordered the annexation of the Dutch Republic, but plans for federation had still not been implemented, owing to the intransigence of the Cape Dutch, by the General Election year of 1880. The Liberal campaign was based on righteous indignation at Conservative foreign policy. Gladstone in his Midlothian tours reiterated the principles of peace and non-intervention abroad, equal rights for all nations and belief in the Concert of Europe. (2) The Liberal Party had been partly

(1) Robinson, Gallagher & Denny, Op cit, p.53.

(2) P. Magnus, Gladstone, a biography, London 1954, p.261 et seq.

democratized in the 1870's - the oligarchic Whig structure of power had begun to break down locally; the mass of the Nonconformists were firmly attached after 1874 to both the Liberal Party and to Gladstone personally; Radical social policies were suggested by Chamberlain and Dilke; finally there was the surge of moral indignation which greeted the Bulgarian atrocities in 1876, and which was extended into condemnation of the Afghan and Zulu Wars.

But while opposing the Disraelian variety of Imperialism, Liberals were not unaware of the importance of the Empire of self-governing colonies, - as Gladstone said, "...while we are opposed to Imperialism, we are devoted to the Empire." (1) Gladstone, backed by the Whigs in the Cabinet, at first tried to complete the work of federation in South Africa begun by his predecessors. But in December 1880 the Boers raised an armed rebellion against the British culminating in the Boer victory of Majuba Hill on 26th February 1881. Meanwhile a conflict in the Cabinet was fought between Radicals and Whigs.

A number of anti-Boer arguments could be put forward; "...they did not know how to govern themselves, that they were in daily danger of the Zulus, that they did not at the time

(1) Ibid, p.287.

object to our annexation." (1) It was suggested that annexation had been almost an act of kindness to save the Boers from destruction by the native tribes and from internal chaos. (2) The Boers were represented as "wild characters, whose hand was against society, and they had left their country...to live in a wild country, untrammelled by any laws. They had oppressed, robbed and shot down, the natives of that country." (3) A stereotype of the Boer character was presented, - "of all the races I ever met, they can boast of being the most extraordinarily dilatory and indolent...Most dirty, uncouth and unkempt." (4) Similar descriptions were being written in 1900. The view had developed that the British were racially superior to the Dutch. British prestige was considered important, especially after the defeat of Majuba Hill, when, - "On every side we hear the usual cry for vengeance and for vindication of the national honour." (5) Majuba was an emotive word, signifying national humiliation,

(1) Methodist Recorder, 11th February 1881.

(2) The Dutch and English in South Africa, By one who has lived nineteen years among them, London 1881.

(3) MSS. Minutes of Birmingham Sunday Evening Debating Society, Birmingham Reference Library, Local History Collection, 27th February 1881.

(4) C.O. 291/14, Transvaal 1881, pamphlet forwarded to C.O. - "A few hints, facts, etc, gathered from life among the Boers."

(5) Nonconformist and Independent, 3rd March 1881.

to Imperialists for years afterwards. Economic factors played very little part in the Imperialist case. The Transvaal goldfields had not been discovered, and the Transvaal was known to be impoverished. The Colonial Office received a few claims for compensation from individuals owning property and businesses in the Transvaal. A farmer who had bought a farm in 1877 wrote "...I would certainly not have done, but for the fact that it was then a British colony and that I, in common with the People of the United Kingdom, had implicit confidence in its remaining so, believing in the sincerity of Her Majesty's Government ... It is impossible to expect that I or anyone from the United Kingdom, could settle under a Dutch Boer Republic, different in its language, customs and laws to those of our own." (1) There were complaints from the holders of shares in the loan made to the Transvaal after annexation, who feared that their investments would be lost. (2) The South African Association of "Merchants, Colonists and others interested in the trade between the United Kingdom and South Africa" protested at the prospect of Boer independence. But they were at least partially, concerned with potential

(1) C.O. 291/14, C.H. Humphries to C.O. 19th May 1881.

(2) Ibid, Holders of Transvaal bonds to C.O. 14th April & 5th May 1881.

commerce in Central Africa, blocked by the Dutch Republics. (1)

Of course concern for the Cape route was largely determined by a desire to protect the Indian Empire with its economic advantages; but the Transvaal controversy finally focussed on Boer illtreatment of the natives. The Humanitarian Imperialists were most significant. The Boers were accused of practising a concealed form of slavery in violation of the Sand River Convention. Chesson, the secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, and a Liberal, wrote a pamphlet, - "The native policy of the Boers in the Transvaal", accusing the Boers of slave raiding, forced labour and general cruelties. (2)

An especially convincing point against the Boers was their attack on Livingstone's encampment in 1852, - which had still not been forgotten by 1900. W.E. Forster and the Earl of Shaftesbury were prominent among the humanitarians. (3)

The London Missionary Society, a Nonconformist mission with branches in South Africa, protested at the native policy of the Boers. (4) The Anti-Slavery Society found that its philanthropic

(1) Ibid, Memorial of the S.A. Association to C.O. 16th March 1881.

(2) Ibid, Chesson to C.O. 15th January 1881.

(3) Ibid, E. of Shaftesbury to C.O. 5th April 1881, enclosing resolution re natives in the Transvaal passed at a public meeting.

Echo, 14th February 1881, letter from Shaftesbury.

(4) Joseph Chamberlain MSS. Birmingham University Library, JC 5/20/40, Chamberlain to R.W. Dale 14th Sept. 1882, re policy of L.M.S.

objectives conflicted with the non-interventionist tendencies of some of its Quaker and Peace Society members. It could not ignore the plight of the natives in South Africa; in February the Society sent a protest to Lord Kimberley, stating that the Boer commandos are "wanting in none of those ruthless features which characterise the slave hunts of the Arabs in Central Africa On this ground therefore, the Committee of the Society would view with the gravest apprehension the existence of a "Boer" community possessing that lawless independence which has enabled them to inflict such devastation and destruction on the natives of South Africa." (1) A pamphlet on Boer slavery (probably Chesson's) was forwarded to M.Ps. and at the end of March, Charles Allen the secretary, attended a meeting at the home of W. James a Conservative M.P. to discuss the native problem. (2) However the Society was ambivalent about Boer independence, - Allen wrote to the press "this society regards the war now raging in South Africa, with feelings of the deepest regret and has no wish to see the Boers deprived of their just rights, so long as these are not allowed at the expense of the native races." (3) Given the ingrained attitudes of

(1) Anti-Slavery Society MSS. Rhodes House Library, Oxford.
A.S.S. Minute Book E2/10, 4th February 1881.

(2) Ibid, 4th March & 1st April 1881.

(3) Echo, 18th February 1881.

the Boers, the attempt to make non-intervention compatible with philanthropy was impossible. The Church of England mission in the Transvaal, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, was especially vehement about the agreement restoring Boer independence, - "the degrading and disgraceful compact to which we owe our relief. I will say nothing more of it than that England little dreams its atrocity." (1) The missions were developing a commitment to Imperial expansion.

The importance of the philanthropic arguments was shown by the trouble taken to refute them by the anti-Imperialists. The native question was a disturbing factor in an otherwise clear cut case against aggression. The response from anti-interventionists varied from outright denial to part-acceptance - with suitable excuses. Edward Verney, the chairman of the Transvaal Independence Committee, accused the philanthropists of fabrication, - "Missionaries and Protection Societies can hardly be said to be impartial; the former at any rate, being in a great degree dependent on a regular supply of sensational stories for their subscription. The Protection Societies owe the whole raison d'etre of their continued existence to such stories and are bound to make history to suit their purpose when they do not find it ready to hand." (2) Another member of the

(1) S.P.G. MSS. Letters from the Pretoria Diocese, Bishop of

(2) Pretoria, 29th March 1881.

(2) E.H. Verney, Four years of protest in the Transvaal, 1881, p.6.

Committee wrote, "...how erroneous were the reports transmitted to England as to the native feeling against the Boers, and no less how unjust were the accusations brought against them of being a slave holding community." (1) The other view was that while the Boers might behave badly to the natives, the British record in the Basuto and Zulu Wars was no better. (2) The Workmen's Peace Association thought, "The conduct of the Boers towards the native tribes may be unjustifiable, but in this a plea to be urged by us whose hands are red with the blood of Afghans and Zulus?" (3) There was uneasiness about Boer native policy, but a feeling that commitments to the Boers were more important than protection of the natives, - "our obligation to the Boers, viz. to give them back their country unjustly taken from them, is surely far greater." (4)

The anti-Imperialists by-passed questions of paramountcy and Imperial security and rejected the Transvaal annexation on moral grounds, - they stressed "consideration of justice rather than the misleading view of national honour and dignity which

(1) Nonconformist and Independent, 10th March 1881.

(2) C.O. 291/14, op cit, extract from The Times 13th January 1881, re peace deputation to C.O.

(3) Nonconformist and Independent, 24th February 1881.

(4) Charles F. Davison, The case of the Boers in the Transvaal, London 1881, p.17.

confounds these with considerations of military prestige or even measures of revenge." (1) Liberals emphasised that at Midlothian, Gladstone "... appealed to the conscience of the country and the response was a moral one." (2) The editorial in a Nonconformist periodical asked "is it just that the Boers should be conquered and slaughtered to preserve in South Africa what we call British prestige ? If so where is it all to end ?" (3) It was obvious that Gladstone was continuing the foreign policy of the Conservatives; a speaker at a London Radical Club "could not understand how Mr. Gladstone's policy now he was in office, could be reconciled with his Midlothian speeches (cheers). Mr. Gladstone out of office condemned the annexation of the Transvaal. Now he was as much a jingo as Randolph Churchill and as bloodthirsty as the Daily Telegraph." (4) The issue was whether the African Empire should be extended or not, - as memorialists to the Government wrote, "Our love of justice is not blinded by the glamour of extended Empire." (5)

(1) MSS. of Leicester Liberal Association, Leicester local history Library, Minutes of annual meeting of General Committee, 21st March 1881, resolution moved by Rev. J. Page Hopps.

(2) Echo, 24th January 1881.

(3) Nonconformist & Independent, 6th January 1881.

(4) Radical, 15th January 1881.

(5) Nonconformist & Independent, 24th February 1881.

Liberals were also aware of the difficulties and expense of a prolonged South Africa War. Chamberlain, the leader of the Radicals in the Cabinet was apprehensive about the complications of "...the most costly, unsatisfactory and difficult of all the little wars which we can possibly undertake...In the event of a new conflict they would probably secure the assistance of the Orange Free State and the sympathy of the Dutch and possibly of Germany...a very large force would be required to ensure success, and you may be sure that a large minority in this country would oppose any Government which proceeded to extremities." (1) It was realised that a large section of Cape Dutch were sympathetic to the Boers, a war would, - "...distort our relations with their fellow-countrymen in other parts of South Africa..." (2) Economy and retrenchment conflicted in the Liberal Party with the desire to achieve supremacy in South Africa.

There was also the tendency to idealise the Boers as simple republican farmers. The fact that they were a Republic won them favour with Radicals. In the eyes of Frederick Harrison the Boers were "free, quiet, toiling yeomen, who cling proudly to their old ways in belief and work and household life, and have

(1) JG 5/20/40, op cit,

(2) Leicester Liberal Association Minutes, op cit, meeting of the General Committee, 20th January 1881, resolution to C.O.

gone into the desert that they may have such Church and State as is right and clear in their eyes...." (1) If Empire meant constant annexations and slaughter then it was "one of the worst curses that now afflicts the earth." (2)

A number of Liberals opposed the official Government policy; opposition in the Cabinet was led by Chamberlain and the veteran Radical and Quaker, John Bright. In the House of Commons on 21st January a motion was proposed and seconded by two back-bench Liberals, - Rylands, (MP. for Burnley) and W. Cartwright (M.P. for an Oxfordshire division), - stating that the House regarded the annexation of the Transvaal as "impolitic and unjustifiable, and would view with regret any measures taken by Her Majesty's Government with the object of enforcing British supremacy over the people of the Transvaal, who rightly claim their national independence." (3) The debate followed predictable lines with the Conservatives emphasising the Boer ill-treatment of the natives and the "state of bankruptcy, anarchy and terror" of the Transvaal, (4) and the anti-expansionist case put by Sir Wilfred Lawson M.P. for Carlisle, - "We talked of

(1) Echo, 17th February 1881.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Hansard, 3rd series, Vol CCLV11, col. 1109 et seq.

(4) Ibid., col. 1128, Sir John Lubbock.

actions of his own position, - "To disapprove the annexation of a country is one thing; to abandon that annexation is another...By the annexation of the Transvaal we contracted new obligations." (2) At one point the House was almost counted out and only a minority of M.Ps. voted in the division. Of 347 Liberal M.Ps. and 65 Irish Nationalists only 33 voted for the motion; there were 129 votes against. Rylands and Cartwright refused to take part in the division, feeling no doubt that they had carried their opposition to the Government far enough. Just over half the 33 votes were from Irish M.Ps. The Liberals included the two Lib-Labs Henry Broadhurst and the miners' leader Thomas Burt, J. Passmore Edwards, (the radical editor of the Echo and M.P. for Salisbury) J.P. Thomasson (M.P. for Bolton), two Scottish MPs. J. D. Peddie and Sir David Wedderburn, and the two tellers Lawson and Alfred Illingworth (M.P. for Bradford). (3) There were a few other Liberal M.Ps. who did not vote but who played a part in the

(1) Ibid, col. 1166.

(2) Ibid, col. 1139.

(3) Echo, 22nd January 1881, - division list.

peace movement, - H.J. Wilson M.P. for the Holmfirth constituency, Henry Richard M.P. for Methyr Tydfil, ⁽¹⁾ and George Palmer M.P. for Reading, and Ashton Dilke M.P. for Newcastle on Tyne. The anti-Imperialists were lining up in Parliament against the Imperialists or moderates in their own party; this formation was to be typical for the next twenty years.

Opposition to the Government percolated down to local Liberal parties and Radical associations. Liberal Associations at Leicester, Newcastle on Tyne, Buckingham and Greenwich sent protests. ⁽²⁾ The Leicester resolution referred to the annexation of the Transvaal as "one of those acts of arbitrary interference with the liberties and rights of others, which did so much during the rule of the late Government to bring discredit upon the good name of the people of this country as lovers of liberty and justice, and to drag the nation into discreditable and costly wars..." ⁽³⁾ All the ingredients of anti-Imperialism were present, especially in the call for a moral foreign policy and for non-intervention. Some Radical Clubs passed resolutions against the Government, - Soho Social

(1) Henry Richard was a Nonconformist and secretary of the Peace Society.

(2) Reynolds Newspaper, 9th January, 20th March 1881.
Echo, 14th February 1881.

(3) Leicester Liberal Association MSS. Minutes of meeting of General Committee 20th January 1881.

Democrat Club and Southwark Home Rule Association passed resolutions linking the Transvaal question with the Irish problem, - they were both seen as examples of unwarranted aggression against nations struggling for independence. (1)

It was apparent that fear of embarrassing the Government kept many Liberals silent; Lawson remarked "... if this had been the state of affairs twelve months ago, they would have had Dukes and Marquesses summoning mass meetings and Mr. Gladstone at every railway station denouncing what was going on. And why should not Liberals now protest against it? It was a shame that they should be silent simply because their friends are in power, and allow this great crime to be committed in their name." (2) This was a comment which was to be made many times during the next four years. Nor did all the Liberal Associations criticize the Government. Lambeth Advanced Liberal Association on hearing speeches from Passmore Edwards and J.P. Thomasson condemned its own M.Ps. for their compliance with the Government in the House of Commons; (3) but Marylebone Liberal Association and Middlesex Liberal Association passed resolutions of confidence in the Government. (4)

(1) Radical, 15th January, 5th & 19th February 1881.

(2) Ibid, 19th March 1881.

(3) Echo, 12th March 1881.

(4) Ibid, 4th & 17th March 1881.

It was realised that Imperialism was beginning to split the Liberal Party. (1)

The Peace movement was largely organised by the Transvaal Independence Committee, of which Edward Verney was the secretary. The Committee included Lawson, Wedderburn, Passmore Edwards, Charles Cameron M.P. and H. Lee M.P.; most of its members were M.Ps. (2) At first activities were confined to the distribution of literature, but on 13th February it was decided to hold a public meeting. (3)

This big London meeting was held in the Memorial Hall on 21st February. Three resolutions were passed condemning the 1877 annexation and calling for Boer independence, proposed and seconded by Liberal and Irish M.Ps. "The mention of the Queen's name ... was received with as many hisses as cheers, and there were unmistakeable groans at every mention of a Liberal minister." (4) A further London meeting was held on 15th March at Freemason Tavern where speakers included Frederick

(1) Ibid, 14th February, argued by members of the T.I.C.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Radical, 26th February 1881.

Harrison and Henry Richard. ⁽¹⁾ On 16th March a meeting in favour of Boer independence was held at Shoreditch Town Hall. ⁽²⁾

There were provincial meetings at Birmingham, Liverpool and Sheffield. The meeting at Birmingham Town Hall on 6th January was organised by the Midlands Arbitration Union, which included Arthur O'Neill a Liberal and former Chartist, and Arthur Albright a Quaker. A number of Liberals appear to have been involved. ⁽³⁾ This was followed by a further meeting on 11th March presided over by Alderman Baker with a large attendance of between four and five thousand people, at which Lawson, Cameron and Ashton Dilke spoke. ⁽⁴⁾

At Liverpool a meeting was held on 14th March with Henry Richard and Lawson as the main speakers. ⁽⁵⁾ At Sheffield H.J. Wilson - an important local industrialist, - presided over a meeting on 23rd February which was addressed by Verney. ⁽⁶⁾ The pattern was that members of the Transvaal Independence

(1) Ibid, 12th March 1881.

(2) Echo, 17th March 1881.

(3) H.J. Wilson MSS. Sheffield local history collection, MD 2520, notice of a public meeting in Birmingham, 6th January 1881.

(4) Friend, April 1881.

(5) Radical, 19th March 1881.

(6) H.J. Wilson MSS. MD 2520, extract from Sheffield Independent, re meeting held on 23rd February 1881.

Committee travelled to provincial centres to speak at meetings.

The Peace Societies were active against the war. Henry Richard wrote indefatigably to the press urging the mobilisation of public opinion, and the Peace Society sent a deputation to Kimberley in January. ⁽¹⁾ The Workmen's Peace Association organised a memorial signed by six hundred workmen which was presented to the Government. ⁽²⁾ Contemporaries had little doubt that the working classes were in favour of peace, though their Liberal political attachments might prevent them from openly expressing dissent from the Government. The Workmen's Memorial expressed regret at having to disagree with the Government. But the writer of a pamphlet on South Africa considered "If the question were to be settled by him (the working man) the soil of the Transvaal would be yet free of the blood of the slain. The men who met at the Memorial Hall the other day to bid England stay her hand were working men. The crowd who clustered round General Roberts as he left to shoot down the Boers last week, were solely the Upper Ten." ⁽³⁾ It was thought that there was a very strong feeling in the country against the war, - even the Methodist Recorder, which

(1) C.O. 291/14, Henry Richards to C.O. 11th January 1881 re deputation.

(2) Nonconformist and Independent, 24th February 1881.

(3) J. Ewing Ritchie, Imperialism in South Africa, London 1881, p.8.

approved of Government policy admitted that the Transvaal question "...grieves and troubles the national conscience." (1) At Birmingham Sunday Evening Debating Society, mainly composed of working or lower middle class men, "On the vote being taken, there were none in favour of the war, but nearly every hand was held up against the prolongation of the war." (2) And this was just after the news of Majuba Hill had been received. The Peace Society claimed to have received several hundred memorials from all parts of the country against the war. (3)

The majority of Nonconformists, the mass of whom were Liberal supporters, were against the war. The mainly Congregationalist periodical Nonconformist and Independent, wrote "To hold such subjects in the Transvaal would be an innovation in our general Imperial policy, and it would be inconsistent with our respect for those moral bonds upon which the maintenance of our Colonial Empire depends." (4) The annexation of the Transvaal was clearly seen as a departure from the acceptable Imperialism of self-governing colonies.

(1) Methodist Recorder, 11th March 1881.

(2) Minutes of Birmingham Sunday Evening Debating Society, 27th February 1881.

(3) Nonconformist and Independent, 19th May 1881, report of annual meeting of the Peace Society.

(4) Ibid, 10th March 1881.

Liberals were beginning to distinguish between "true" Imperialism and "new" Imperialism. The Nonconformist and Independent, for example argued that Ireland was an instance of the older, acceptable Imperialism, and Irish Home Rule was not justified since Ireland had "organised unity" with the rest of the British Isles. (1)

The Baptist argued that "The Boers owe no allegiance to England and they are no more to be blamed for asserting their independence in the only way open to them, than England would be to blame if she resisted a similar encroachment by France." (2) Nonconformists were concerned with the rights of nationalities. Only the Methodist Recorder dissented from these views, in favour of British supremacy in South Africa. (3) Methodists had been the last of the Nonconformists to ally with the Liberal Party and Wesleyan Methodists in particular were noted for their conservative views. They advocated acceptance of a responsible Imperialism, "we cannot retire within ourselves as France can." (4)

There were some Nonconformist protests, - the Baptist

(1) Ibid.

(2) Baptist, 28th January 1881.

(3) Methodist Recorder, 1st April 1881.

(4) Ibid., 11th February 1881.

urged meetings in the country to protest against the war. ⁽¹⁾
 The Baptist Midland Conference in March, representing eighty
 three churches and over ten thousand members passed a resolution
 deprecating the war. ⁽²⁾ The Nottinghamshire Congregational
 Union passed a resolution of thanks when the armistice was
 declared. ⁽³⁾ The Society of Friends while anxious about
 the natives in the Transvaal was not prepared to condone the
 war, - Yorkshire Friends at Bradford sent a memorial to the
 Government asking for the termination of hostilities and
 suggesting the Peace Societies plan of arbitration to solve
 the problem. ⁽⁴⁾

Most of the organisations which were to be known
 for their anti-Imperialism in the future, were present in 1881.
 The Positivists, - who issued a formal protest against the war, ⁽⁵⁾
 the Nonconformists, the Peace Societies and the more Radical
 sections of the Liberal Party. The Liberal anti-Imperialists
 were varied, - they ranged from advanced Radicals such as G.B.
 Clark and Passmore Edwards to rather old-fashioned temperance

(1) Baptist, 25th February 1881.

(2) Ibid, 18th March 1881.

(3) Nonconformist and Independent, 31st March 1881.

(4) Friend, March 1881.

(5) Echo, 12th February 1881.

reformers like Wilfred Lawson and H.J. Wilson. From Quaker and dissenting Peace Society platforms, the anti-Imperialist elements ranged to the working class organisations. Anti-Imperialism thus cut across a wide section of society.

On 2nd March the Radical ministers threatened to resign unless negotiations with the Boers were resumed. ⁽¹⁾ The Radicals defeated the Whigs by insisting on an agreement with the Boers, - Chamberlain wrote in his diary, - "The majority in the Cabinet of whom I was one and which also included Mr. Gladstone, refused to assent to further bloodshed in order to avenge the honour of the flag and came to the conclusion that the annexation had been made on incorrect information and ought to be repealed." ⁽²⁾ The Transvaal became a Republic once more, though it remained under a rather vague British suzerainty as far as its relations with foreign powers and bordering natives tribes were concerned.

(1) Robinson, Gallagher & Denny, Op cit, p.70.

(2) Joseph Chamberlain MSS. JC 8/1/1-35, Diary 1880-1892. 1881.

Intervention in Egypt and the Sudan 1882-5.Liberal attitudes.

The Government elected in 1880 on a platform opposed to Disraelian Foreign Policy, was to occupy Egypt and take the first steps of an advance into the Sudan and Central Africa. It was true that Whig Foreign Policy in practice owed more to Palmerstonian tactics than to Midlothian principles; and the Whig element in the Cabinet was strong. Lord Granville was at the Foreign Office; Lord Hartington was Secretary for India and for War after December 1882; Lord Kimberley was Secretary for the Colonies, - exchanged for the India Office in December 1882; Lord Northbrook was First Lord of the Admiralty. The Radicals held only minor posts, - Chamberlain as President of the Board of Trade, and Sir Charles Dilke as President of the Local Government Board after 1882. But even Gladstone and the Radicals were not prepared to give up what they regarded as legitimate British interests for the sake of moral principles. Liberal principles themselves could be double edged weapons, - the intervention in Egypt was justified as an attempt to establish representative government on the Liberal model.

The Egyptian problem developed from the informal control of Egyptian finances established in the 1870's. The frequent loans made to the Khedive had necessitated a joint

Anglo-French Dual Control in 1876, which supervised the repayments of interest on the debt. By 1880 intervention in the internal affairs of Egypt, - the installation of a new Khedive, Tewfik, in 1879, for instance, was causing the political structure to disintegrate. The result was the military rebellion led by Arabi Pasha in 1881. As far as possible British statesmen of both parties preferred the traditional indirect methods of control to the hazards and expense of direct responsibility, entailing an occupation, but they could not remain blind to the fact that the Arabist rebellion might endanger the passage through the Suez Canal, the vital route to India and the East. Ministers were anxious not to act without France, the other partner in the Control. But an Anglo-French naval demonstration in May only strengthened Arabi's position, and on 11th and 12th June the Alexandrian riots occurred in which a good deal of European property was destroyed and fifty Europeans were killed. The decisive step towards intervention was taken on 11th July when the British navy bombarded the forts at Alexandria and followed this up by an expedition under Lord Wolseley. This turned out as a purely British endeavour owing to a last minute change of plan by the new French Government. The military success of the undertaking was assured with the defeat of Arabi at Tel-el-Kebir on 13th September. The British were the de facto masters of

Egypt and were faced with the problem of propping up an unpopular Khedive and administering the country almost as a dependency.

In 1882 Liberal opinion in the Cabinet and House of Commons was characterised by a general agreement with the course of action taken in Egypt. Only John Bright resigned from the Cabinet on the bombardment of Alexandria, and his position was felt to be exceptional since the Society of Friends opposed all war on principle. His belief in the application of a moral code to foreign policy struck no answering code in Gladstone who argued that legitimate authority must be restored in Egypt and that the Anglo-French character of the intervention turned it into a correct display of the European Concert in action. ⁽¹⁾ In proposing the vote of credit of £2,300,000 for the expedition, on 24th July Gladstone expanded his arguments in a way likely to appeal to Liberals. He placed responsibility for the crisis on the Conservatives who had begun the Dual Control procedure, promised reforms in Egypt, made great play of the state of anarchy under the Arabists as "one of lawless military violence" and the

(1) Gladstone MSS. ADD. MSS. 44113, Gladstone to Bright, 14th July 1882, Bright to Gladstone, 15th July 1882.

provocation afforded by the Alexandrian riots, and finally denied that the Arabists were a popular national party. ⁽¹⁾

Dilke and Chamberlain also pressed for intervention. Chamberlain noted in his diary in June "I had come round to the opinion that action had become inevitable, and accordingly I joined H(artington) in pressing for active measures." ⁽²⁾

Dilke spoke for the Government in the three day debate in the Commons in July emphasizing the route to India as the main grounds of intervention, claiming moral support in Europe for the expedition, denouncing Arabi and assuming that the occupation would only be temporary. ⁽³⁾ Henry Labouchere was

one of the Radicals supporting intervention on strategic grounds, - "For my part I have always believed that we and we alone ought to be masters in Egypt, for if we are not, we shall not long be masters in India. Our supremacy on the Nile is just as geographically necessary as that we should be masters of the English Channel." ⁽⁴⁾ Although he was a bondholder he did not think that the money lenders should claim any special protection, - "Our concern with Egypt begins and ends

(1) Hansard, 3rd series, Vol CCLX11, col. 1576 et seq.

(2) Chamberlain MSS. JC 8/1/1-35, Diary 1880-1892, entry for 11th June 1882.

(3) Hansard, 3rd series, Vol CCLX11, col. 1710 et seq.

(4) Truth, 20th July 1882.

with securing to ourselves a passage through the Canal...so far as the internal Government of the country is concerned all that we can claim is that Englishmen may pursue their avocations there in peace and security." (1) But interest on the bonds should not be guaranteed any more than it was for Turkish or South American bonds.

The preservation of the Liberal consensus rested on a determination to disprove the theory, - prevalent among opponents of the Government, - that intervention was being undertaken in the interests of the bondholders. Chamberlain wrote "...I desired to base intervention entirely on the necessity of keeping faith with the Khedive and obtaining reparations for the massacres and securing the safety of the Suez Canal. I desired to separate these ground entirely from the claims of the bondholders which I thought should stand on their merits." (2) Granville insisted that the Government's case should rest on "the need for settled Government at Cairo in order to make the Canal safe, or else on ...the probable complicity of Arabi in the Alexandrian massacres, or both." (3)

(1) Ibid, 21st September 1882.

(2) Chamberlain MSS. Diary, op cit.

(3) Dilke MSS. ADD. MSS. 43,800, Granville to Dilke 4th July 1882.

Liberals had to be convinced that the Arabist rebellion had no popular support and that good government would be established in Egypt. Arabi was roundly denounced, - Granville wrote "I do not wish for any compromise with Arabi. He in no sense represents the national life of Egypt, but on the contrary he holds the Egyptian nationality by the throat. His use of the phrase "national party" is a mere prostitution of the term." (1) The fact that the rebellion had military foundations helped to swing Liberal opinion against it, - it was considered impossible that a military coup could establish any form of representative government. Radicals like Leonard Courtney M.P. approved of the suppression of Arabi. (2) The British took the place of the native Egyptians as the bearers of democratic government; as Chamberlain said "The duty cast upon us as the Liberal Government of a free nation is to recover to the Egyptian people the greatest possible development of representative institutions." (3) The leading Congregationalist clergyman J.C. Rogers summed up the Liberal case, - "That England could have folded her arms and allowed Egypt to pursue her own course without taking any concern in

(1) Ibid.

(2) G.P. Gooch, Life of Lord Courtney, London 1920, p.124.

(3) Chamberlain MSS. JC 7/1/3/1-7, Memorandums on Egypt etc, 1880-1895.

her was simply impossible....it would have been as fatal to the liberties of Egypt as it would have been menacing to the interests of our Indian Empire." (1) The majority of Liberals were by no means opposed to the preservation of the existing Empire, - Labouchere wrote in 1882 "If it could be proved that our Empire would perish if we did not establish ourselves in Egypt, I am by no means certain but what I should be in favour of our establishment." (2)

Liberals also believed that the occupation of Egypt would be only of short duration, and a final piece of apologia for the Government was provided in the argument that the Cabinet had been forced to act against its wishes, as a result of the legacy left by the Conservatives. Lord Selborne the Lord President of the Council, though admitting to strong feelings against the tendency of European nations to appropriate and occupy countries inhabited by uncivilized and imperfectly civilized races, as if their inhabitants had no rights," (3) was a supporter of Liberal intervention in Egypt and the Sudan, - "the view which I took of this whole question and which

(1) Nineteenth Century, June 1885, pps. 909-925, J.G. Rogers, "Mr. Gladstone as a Foreign Minister."

(2) A. Thorold, Op cit, p.182.

(3) Roundel Palmer, Earl of Selborne, Memorials, Personal and Political, 1865-95, London 1898, Vol 2, p.103.

led me to acquiesce in all that was done, was that we had inevitable been drawn into a situation from which active interference to re-establish the Khedive's authority was the only way of escape." (1) Critics of the Government accepted the inevitability plea. The two Liberal M.Ps. for South Durham "Both spoke strongly against the war. Both stated that they could not consistently vote with the Government for the supplies; but both justified the Government in view of the responsibilities to which it had been drawn by circumstances not of its own choosing." (2) Nonconformists tended to attribute the Government's problems to the preceding six years of Conservative misrule, - the Nonconformist and Independent referred to "an ominous conjunction of circumstances resulting from a policy bequeathed to them by their predecessors which seems to deprive them of all initiative." (3) It was appreciated that the Government "had muddled and drifted with events. Each fateful step seemed to be dictated by circumstances rather than by will." (4)

The opposition to the Government in the House of Commons

(1) Ibid, p.68.

(2) Friend, October 1882.

(3) Nonconformist and Independent, 20th July 1882.

(4) Robinson, Gallagher & Denny, Op cit, p.120.

in 1882, was weak. Labouchere thought that the "Peace-at-all-Price Party" numbered about twenty and estimated "perhaps half a dozen would vote against the ministry, if they thought the result of the vote would be a ministerial defeat." (1) This was an accurate assessment, - on 27th July only nineteen M.Ps. voted against the motion for supply for Egypt. The Liberals were Lawson, Alfred Illingworth, Henry Richard, Thomas Burt, Jesse Collings - the radical friend of Chamberlain, Wedderburn, Samuel Storey (M.P. for Sunderland) and T.C. Thompson (M.P. for Durham City). One Conservative voted against the Government, - Sir Percy Wyndham the father of George Wyndham who disapproved of intervention in Egypt. All the remainder of the nineteen were Irish M.Ps. (2) Lawson led the attack on the Government contending that we were fighting to "grind down the people of Egypt to obtain money for the bondholders of this country.... nothing more nor less than an effort to pay the interest on the bondholders' money." He stood firmly by the principle of non-intervention, - "...for the Liberals of all people to engage in a war to prevent people running their own affairs was simply disgusting." (3) Lawson was not influenced by loyalty to the

(1) Truth, 20th July 1882.

(2) Hansard, 3rd series, Vol CCLXII, col. 2108, division list.

(3) Ibid, cols. 1705-9.

Government; he suffered a bitter disillusionment as a result of the Ministry's policy, - "I looked on all those proceedings with an astonishment and disgust which I cannot describe. For days and days I thought and hoped I was living in a dream, and that it could not be possible that Mr. Gladstone fresh from the Midlothian campaign where he had preached so gloriously, peace and non-intervention, should now be carrying fire and sword into a country which only wanted to be left alone to govern itself." (1)

The Peace Party viewed the situation in terms of right and wrong rather than in the context of complicated diplomacy, as in Henry Richard's splendidly simple maxim that foreign policy should be subjected "to the test of severe Christian morality." (2)

But most Liberals were awayed either by loyalty to the Government or by Gladstone's appeal for the rule of law in Egypt. Courtney and Labouchere, later to be known as two of the most vociferous anti-Imperialists, voted for the Government, though John Morley and the two Quakers John Bright and Joseph Pease abstained.

But towards the end of 1882 and in 1883 there was mounting dissatisfaction among Liberals. The exclusion of France from the

(1) Sir Wilfred Lawson, a Memoir, edited by G.W.E. Russell, London 1909, p.166.

(2) Hansard, 3rd series, Vol CCLX11, col.1766.

Egyptian settlement had resulted in bad relations with that country, only mild beginnings in administrative reform had been made by Sir Evelyn Baring the Consul General in Cairo, and the prospects of withdrawal by British troops were vague. Labouchere moved over to an anti-Imperialist position arguing that occupation was not necessary for the safety of the Canal, and claiming, "The difficult position in which we are, arrives from not having broken entirely with the Conservative policy in Egypt...we gave advice which is not taken, try to tinker up an unprofitable financial position and make ourselves responsible for every folly committed by a gang of corrupt and silly Pasha^s. The result is that we are now told that we have a new frontier somewhere in the direction of the Equator and that our honour is concerned etc. etc." (1) With the complication of the Mahdist revolt in the Sudan, the legitimate protection of British interests appeared to be degenerating into a new and disturbing policy of seizing territory in Africa, with which Liberals like Labouchere could have no sympathy. They objected to any additions to the Empire unless a watertight case based on national interests could be proved, and this did not seem to exist in Egypt by 1883, and certainly not in the

(1) Chamberlain MSS. JG 5/50/12-19, correspondence with Labouchere, Labouchere to Chamberlain, 15th December 1883.

Sudan. Morley began to press for self-government for the Egyptians, "The Egyptians are as fit for a Chamber as the Bulgarians were. It won't be as noble a place as the House of Commons, but it will do." (1) Chamberlain was writing as early as October 1882 about "evidence of the existence of an uneasy feeling among Liberals with respect to Egyptian questions. It cannot be conceded in spite of the almost unanimous approval of the London and provincial press, that the war has ever been popular. It has been accepted on the authority of the Government and especially of Mr. Gladstone as a disagreeable necessity, but if the campaign had been protracted we should have had a mauvais quart d'heure." (2)

The Egyptian question by the end of 1883 had been complicated by the religious/nationalist revolt in the Sudan against Egypt's rule. Britain, having taken effective charge of Egypt, might also be held responsible for law and order in the Sudan, which Egypt wished to reconquer. On 22nd November 1883 news reached London that an Egyptian army under the command of a British officer, Hicks Pasha, had been annihilated in the Sudan. The Government were determined that the greater part of the Sudan must be given up, but were under an obligation to

(1) Chamberlain MSS. JC 5/54/428-602, correspondence with Morley, Morley to Chamberlain 20th October 1882.

(2) Chamberlain MSS, JC 7/1/3/1-7, Memorandums on Egypt etc. Minute on the Egyptian settlement 18th October 1882.

rescue the Egyptian garrisons and preserve the Red Sea ports on the Suez Canal India route. The Government had twice suggested to Baring that General Charles Gordon might be able to cope with the situation, before the development of a press campaign in the Times and the Pall Mall Gazette to send him to the Sudan. (1) If his rather unstable character were disregarded, he was a fairly obvious choice since he had acted as Governor General of the Sudan from 1874 to 1879, and was supposed to have considerable influence over the native chiefs. His exploits in China and other parts of the world had inspired a feeling that he was particularly good at dealing with tricky situations. On 1st January 1884, Sir Samuel Baker an explorer and Gordon's predecessor in the Sudan, wrote to the Times urging Gordon's employment and against the abandonment of the Sudan. The Pall Mall Gazette, which had followed an expansionist policy since W.T. Stead had become the editor in 1883, followed this up by an enthusiastic interview with Gordon on his return to England on 8th January from Belgium where he had been arranging to work in the Congo. It is likely that the Whigs in the Cabinet who were not averse to reconquest of the Sudan, hoped that Gordon would ignore his instructions and

(1) Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS. 44,176, Granville to Gladstone 14th January 1884.

make intervention in the Sudan a necessity; Wilfred Scawen Blunt asserted that Stead was working with Hartington and Granville to convince Gladstone that Gordon should be sent to the Sudan, ⁽¹⁾ but Stead always denied this. ⁽²⁾ Gordon departed for the Sudan on 18th January with instructions to "report on the military situation in the Soudan, on measures for the security of the Egyptian garrison and on the Egyptian population of Khartoum, on the best mode of evacuation of the interior and of securing the safety and good administration of the Sea coast by the Egyptian Government." ⁽³⁾

No sooner had Gordon arrived than he began to get into difficulties and bombarded the Government with a series of contradictory telegrams and pleas for "smashing the Mahdi". Tokar and Sinkat on the Red Sea fell to the Mahdists, the telegraph link with the Sudan was cut, and Gordon was besieged in Khartoum.

The Conservatives began to press for a relief expedition. On 7th February Sir Stafford Northcote moved a vote of censure against the Government and this was repeated on 12th May with Sir H. Hicks Beach's motion of censure. But on the other hand

(1) W.S. Blunt, Gordon at Khartoum, London 1911, p.163.

(2) F. Whyte, Op cit, p.128.

(3) Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS. 44,176, Granville to Gladstone 18th January 1884.

Liberal opposition to a policy of expansion was mounting. On 7th February Lawson put forward an amendment "This House whilst declining at present to express an opinion on the Egyptian policy which Her Majesty's Government have pursued during the last two years with the support of the House, trusts that in future British forces may not be employed for the purpose of interfering with the Egyptian people in the selection of their own Government." (1) In the same way George Campbell (M.P. for Kirkcaldy Burghs) proposed an amendment to the Hicks Beach motion, suggesting that Gordon should be ordered to leave the Sudan. (2) Both amendments were withdrawn mainly because the peace party were satisfied with the Prime Minister's attitude; Gladstone showed no signs of succumbing to the pressure for a relief expedition, repeated that Gordon's mission must be completely pacific, and made his famous judgement on the Sudanese, "...a people struggling to be free. Yea these are people struggling to be free, and they are struggling rightly to be free." (3)

But the Cabinet was much more inclined to see the necessity for a Sudan expedition. The pressure was begun by

(1) Hansard, 3rd series, Vol CCLXXXIV, Col. 896.

(2) Ibid., 3rd series, Vol CCLXXXV111, 12th May 1884.

(3) Ibid., col. 52et seq.

Hartington and Selborne, who were joined by Chamberlain and Dilke in April. ⁽¹⁾ In the end only Sir William Harcourt and Gladstone were really opposed, ⁽²⁾ and their objections were overborne when Hartington threatened to resign on 31st July if the expedition were not sent.

The expedition led by Wolseley did not arrive at Khartoum in time, - the city was captured by the Mahdi and Gordon killed. In spite of the ^punsubstantiated surge of feeling against the Government which followed the news of the fall of Khartoum on 5th February 1885, a substantial minority of Liberals were not prepared to countenance a continuation of the campaign. one hundred and twelve M.P.s voted for Morley's amendment put on 23rd February, regretting the decision of the Government to overthrow the Mahdi. ⁽³⁾ These included seventy two Liberals counting the tellers, and forty two Irish Nationalists. Although the majority included two hundred and seventeen Liberals (plus two hundred and twenty nine Conservatives and eleven Home Rulers), this was a considerable improvement on the eight anti-interventionist Liberals of 1882. Morley by this time was the leader of the peace party, - he wrote to Chamberlain a few

(1) Gladstone MSS. ADD. MSS. 44,176, Granville to Gladstone 22nd March & 27th March 1884.

(2) Robinson, Gallagher & Denny, Op cit. pps. 141-5.

(3) Hansard, 3rd series, Vol CCXCIV, 23rd February 1885.

days before the House of Commons debate "...war in the Soudan is an affair of political conscience with me. I would sooner leave the House of Commons and go back to my books again than have anything to do with such a business...The party will break upon it in spite of Mr. Gladstone's preternatural influence." (1) Frederick Harrison in fact in 1884 was urging Morley and Courtney to form a break-away party "...on one plain platform, - No reconquest of the Soudan." (2) He estimated that at least fifty M.Ps. would join and a large section of radicals outside Parliament and added "It is no good now thinking of Gladstone, Chamberlain, Dilke or the party. They must take care of themselves. I shall be surprised if they part from their old true friends." (3) But there was no indication that Morley, a loyal follower of Gladstone, contemplated anything more drastic than pressure on the leadership from within the party.

The peace party in the Commons, indeed, did not slacken their efforts. Towards the end of March 1885, Liberal back-benchers were reported to be signing a memorial urging the withdrawal of the Sudan expedition, and feeling was so strong

(1) Chamberlain MSS. JC 5/54/603-809, correspondence with Morley, Morley to Chamberlain, 14th February 1885.

(2) Frederick Harrison MSS, British Library of Political Science, Correspondence with Morley, Harrison to Morley 12th February 1884.

(3) Ibid,
See also G.P. Gooch, Op cit, pps. 223 et seq.

- "that they contemplated moving the adjournment of the House yesterday evening (27th March) in order to raise a discussion upon it." (1) But it was decided to postpone a debate till after the Easter recess. It was probably only the decision of the Cabinet on 13th April to evacuate the Sudan which averted a renewal of controversy in the Parliamentary Party, - the decision was not made public till 20th April, but M.Ps. possibly had wind of it before then.

The Cabinet was fully aware of the divisions of opinion in the Party, - Chamberlain referred to "...the division of opinion which may be very serious in the country is not in the House of Commons." (2) He was full of doubts, "To leave the country in face of the Mahdi's success might be very noble and very Christian, but it would be misunderstood by everyone else and in my opinion would be very dangerous. On the other hand "smashing the Mahdi" is not a congenial occupation and the cost, delay and loss of life will combine to make it unpopular." (3) Anxiety permeated the Cabinet, - Dilke described the Cabinet meeting of 13th February, "We began to discuss our Soudan

(1) Bradford Observer, 28th March 1885.

(2) Chamberlain MSS. JC 5/54/603-809, correspondence with Morley, Chamberlain to Morley, 15th February 1885.

(3) Ibid, Chamberlain to Morley 11th February 1885.

policy with some anxiety. Courtney and Morley had insisted in private letters that we should only rescue, and not attack the rebels... Wolseley's policy could be represented as one of "smash and retire"... Hartington the most strongly pressed his proposals for the Suakim railroad, and wished me to be a member of a Cabinet Committee to consider the proposal." (1)

By 7th March the opposition in the Cabinet to the Sudan campaign had increased, "Northbrook and I, soon joined by Harcourt and Chamberlain, were in favour of stopping our irresponsible campaign." (2) The necessity of concentrating on the Afghan boundary dispute with Russia finally determined the Ministry to call a halt in the Sudan.

After Gordon's death was confirmed, it was in fact pointless to continue the war, unless a Sudan protectorate were envisaged and no ministry would have favoured the expense and trouble entailed in that suggestion. The change in Liberal opinion in the House of Commons between 1882 and 1885, can be explained in terms of the different issues involved. The majority of Liberal M.Ps. were not peace-at-any-price advocates and were prepared to defend national interests. They agreed with the Egyptian expedition in 1882

(1) Dilke MSS. ADD.MSS. 43,939, Political Memoirs, 1885, 13th February 1885.

(2) Ibid, 7th March 1885.

because they were persuaded that it was necessary to preserve British military and trade interests in the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. Liberals were prepared to defend the Empire but by this they meant the Empire of white colonies and the long-established Indian dependency. They had no liking for Imperialist expansion in Africa for its own sake when no specific interest appeared to be at stake. Hence they were not willing to conquer the Sudan in 1885, because, apart from the doubtful danger to the Egyptian frontier, there seemed to be no sound reason for doing so. The arguments of civilization, mission and prestige, had not yet strongly pervaded Liberalism. Lawson in a letter to Courtney contrasted the Liberal position in 1882 with that in 1885, - "The most encouraging thing was that apparently the people agreed with your view of the matter... You are luckier than I was, when I attempted to stump the country against Gladstone's invasion of Egypt in 1882, for not only was I then absolutely alone, but the Liberal jingoes generally continued to make a disturbance at meetings and prevent a fair statement of the case." (1)

Among Liberals in the country it is likely that there was some heart-searching about the Government's policy even in 1882. This was often stifled by a desire not to embarrass a

(1) G.P. Gooch, Op cit, pps. 223-4.

Liberal Government. There were a great many pleas to Liberals to preserve unity. The Nonconformist and Independent appealed in 1882, - "once more, we earnestly trust that all Liberals will be prepared to sacrifice whatever they possibly can of personal opinion, where that threatens a Government which, for the time being, stands between us and chaos." (1) The Society of Friends was noted for its acquiescence in 1882, - "Not a single Friend was found to oppose the vote of credit...are we to infer that we protest only when war is undertaken by a Conservative Government from whose general policy we dissent." (2)

Opposition was much greater by 1885, - Morley wrote of a Glasgow meeting a few days after the fall of Khartoum, "I had a great meeting and a first class reception. They went heartily with me against the proposed iniquities in the Soudan, - let there be no delusion there. Of course they will stand by Mr. Gladstone, even where they think him wrong. But they will think him wrong in all this." (3) T.B. Potter M.P. for Rochdale wrote in 1884 "I do not think many of our friends wish the annexation of Egypt, far less the wild scheme

(1) Nonconformist and Independent, 3rd August 1882.

(2) Friend, September 1882.

(3) Chamberlain MSS. JC 5/54/603-809, Morley correspondence, Morley to Chamberlain 11th February 1885.

of reconquering the Soudan." (1) A Leeds constituent of Herbert Gladstone was probably typical of a good many Liberals, - he wrote "I am sorry to say that the conclusion forced on my mind is that the Government in this Egyptian business started wrong, and they have continued to go wrong ever since...I am a supporter of the Government pained at being compelled to take strong exception to their action on so grave a matter as this." We have forced on Egypt "a Khedive whom they hate, and when a national movement was struggling into life, we, in the most ruthless and despotic manner, stamped it out." (2) Gladstone in replying could only admit "the extraordinary diversity of views in the Liberal Party as to what ought to be done, from first to last." (3)

Even in 1885 it was thought "...eminently unpatriotic to embarrass the Government at such a point with adverse criticism." (4) This attitude was based on the realization that the only alternative was a hated Conservative Government; "always in the background has appeared the figure of Lord

(1) Granville MSS. Public Record Office, 30/29/152, T.B. Potter to Granville 11th February 1884.

(2) Herbert Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS. 46,040, James Gozney to Herbert Gladstone, 27th April 1884.

(3) Ibid, Herbert Gladstone's note on back of letter.

(4) Press cuttings relating to Handsworth political associations, Birmingham Reference Library, local History Collection, extract from Birmingham Daily Post, 11th February 1885.

Salisbury, who has so often avowed his hatred of peace principles and Quaker influence." (1) A letter to the Friend asked "Are we to support the best ministry we can get, or are we to cut our own throats because the ministry does not completely realise our ideal?" (2) Some Liberals were willing to sacrifice their views on foreign policy in return for social reform at home, especially for the Franchise Bill which was going through Parliament in 1884-5. The Reynolds News in spite of its opposition to the Sudan war hoped that radicals would support the Government on account of the Reform Bill. (3) Wycombe Liberal Association regretted "that any Liberal should at such a critical time risk all the valuable domestic reforms prepared by the Government, simply because they differ on a complicated question of Foreign Policy." (4)

There was also the tremendous personal respect for Gladstone among Liberals. Courtney assessed several meetings which he had attended in 1884-5, - "...as far as I can test the

(1) Friend, April 1884.

(2) Ibid, April 1885.

(3) Reynolds News, 15th February 1885.

(4) The Times, 18th March 1884.

temper of the commonalty of England, I should say that their feeling towards the Egyptian policy and action is one of supreme disgust, and nothing but the respect they feel for Mr. Gladstone would have tolerated it in their minds for an instant." (1) As Thomas Burt put it "...they had great faith in Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues. They knew that the Liberal Government had made extraordinary efforts to do right and to maintain peace in other parts of the world, and they could not believe that a Ministry which had given such unequivocal evidence that it was peaceful and unaggressive on one continent would be likely to rush into a needless and unavoidable war on another." (2) There was an almost pathetic faith in Gladstone's judgement, - J.G. Rogers wrote "...I put trust in a Cabinet of which Mr. Gladstone was the chief and in which Mr. Bright was a leading member...I might not like, did not like, the occupation of Egypt, but I had sufficient confidence in Mr. Gladstone to believe that he would never have been a party to it had any other course been open." (3) Even Herbert Gladstone's Leeds correspondent could not believe "that the

(1) The Times, 13th February 1885.

(2) Fortnightly Review, August 1882, Thomas Burt, "Working Men and the war."

(3) Nineteenth Century, July 1898, pps. 30-45, J.G. Rogers, "Mr. Gladstone and the Nonconformists" .

Prime Minister's heart is in this business." (1) Henry Richard asking Nonconformists to petition against the war, commented "May we not believe that such an expression of opinion would be welcomed by Mr. Gladstone himself?" (2)

Little dissatisfaction was openly expressed by Liberals in 1882; but Henry Richard's description of the situation appeared to be fairly accurate, - "there has been no enthusiasm for the war anywhere. The speeches of the majority of supporters of the Government, are not so much defences of, as apologies for, the Egyptian policy. In meetings that have been held, the only resolution that has been heartily passed has been that rejoicing that the war is over." (3) A few Liberal Executive committees passed guarded resolutions of confidence in the Government like those from South Durham and Woolwich Liberals, (4) and Birmingham Liberal "200" on the resignation of Bright; this was the resolution of which Lawson scathingly remarked "It reminded him of a good book he once read called "Making the best of both worlds." It was holding with the non-interventionists

(1) Herbert Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS.46,040. James Gozney to Herbert Gladstone, 28th February 1885.

(2) Nonconformist and Independent, 5th March 1885.

(3) Friend, November 1882.

(4) Daily News, 2nd August 1882.

A.E. Pease, Elections and Recollections, London 1932, p.69.

and hunting with the Jingoos." (1) But by the end of September Birmingham Liberal Association Executive Committee was expressing satisfaction at the end of the war and hoping for liberty and self-government for the Egyptian people. (2) There was no doubt that most Liberals were uneasy at the war, and extremely thankful when it was over and their consciences could be salved by the panacea of reforms in Egypt. Leyton Liberal Association regretted the war, was pleased "to see that a fair trial is to be obtained for Arabi Pasha", and was anxious for a genuinely national Government in Egypt. (3)

Most Liberal M.Ps. justified their support of the Government by reference to the Suez route and the necessity of establishing law and order in Egypt. (4) They invoked national interests like Arthur Arnold M.P. for Salford who was "determined to maintain that heritage of power throughout the world, which had been transmitted to us and which it was

(1) Hansard, 3rd series, Vol CCLX11, Col. 1708.

(2) Reynolds News, 24th September 1882.

(3) F.O. 78/3478, Egypt, domestic and various, October 1882, resolution of 28th October.

(4) Manchester Guardian, 17th July 1882, - Henry Broadhurst's defence of the Government.

Birmingham Daily Post, 17th, 19th July 1882.

our highest duty to preserve." (1) There was reluctance to discuss the matter at all; on 22nd July Lawson proposed a resolution at the Cobden Club, condemning the bombardment of Alexandria as an "international outrage", but the president T.B. Potter M.P. and other members refused to allow a debate. (2) Another attempt by Edward Verney to instigate a discussion at the Club's annual general meeting a few days later, met with the same objections. (3)

Lawson admitted that his anti-war campaign was not especially successful. At a meeting at Aspatia in his own constituency, he managed to get a vote carried declaring the Government's policy to be not truly Liberal, but there was some support for the Government there. (4) When he spoke at a Glasgow public meeting the president of the Liberal Club, (who later became a Unionist) proposed a pro-Government amendment which was passed. (5)

(1) Manchester Guardian, 10th July 1882.

(2) Ibid, 24th July 1882.

(3) Ibid, 31st July 1882.

(4) Reynolds News, 17th September 1882.

(5) G.W.E. Russell, Op cit, p.167.

Most of the opposition to the war came from radical and often working class Liberals. The Liberal Associations in the mainly working class districts of Whitechapel and Tower Hamlets condemned the war. ⁽¹⁾ Keighley Radical Club, after a two night debate in September, passed a resolution by a large majority asking that "not a single life may be lost, nor a shilling of public money be spent in defending the pecuniary interests of European officials or Bondholders, but that the troops may be withdrawn at the earliest possible moment consistent with public safety, and that in future the people of Egypt may be left to make their own laws, choose their own rulers and vote their own budgets." ⁽²⁾ While this resolution half accepted a temporary occupation, it was couched in stronger terms than other Liberal resolutions. In July a protest against the war was signed by "more than six hundred representative working men in all parts of the country." ⁽³⁾ At London meetings of members of political clubs and radical associations, according to the Echo, "nine out of ten delegates were Liberals and condemned the Government's policy." ⁽⁴⁾

(1) Echo, 4th August 1882.

(2) F.O. 78/3477, Egypt, Domestic & Various 14th-30th Sept. 1882 resolution sent 21st Sept.

(3) Echo, 4th August 1882.

(4) Ibid, 17th July 1882.

The opposition to the Sudan campaign 1884-5.

There was a much greater Liberal outcry against a war in the Sudan, following the fall of Khartoum in February 1885, and the Government's announcement that they intended to carry on the campaign. The opposition was strong in spite of the pressures of the Gordon cult and the emotional feeling that the fall of Khartoum was a national humiliation. Until definite news of Gordon's death was received on 11th February, most Liberal M.Ps. took a "rescue and retire" line, ⁽¹⁾ but as time went on the "retire" aspect received the most emphasis. A few Liberals such as E. Marjoribanks M.P. for Berwickshire and H.T. Reid M.P. for Hereford, were prepared to approve of occupation of the Sudan as a logical consequence of intervention in Egypt. ⁽²⁾ This approach was only really convincing if the Mahdi seriously threatened invasion of Egypt, and as time went on this became less probable. Apart from the desire to ^aavenge Gordon, which most Liberals deprecated, a war in the Sudan could only be useful if it were intended to occupy the country permanently, and neither Liberal statesmen nor Liberal supporters in the Country wanted to

(1) This was the line taken by Thomas Burt and the two Oldham M.Ps. H.J. Hibbert and E.L. Stanley, - the Times, 7th February 1885, & Birmingham Daily Post, 10th February 1885.

(2) Scotsman, 16th February, 25th February 1885.

contemplate this. The Liberal opposition to the war was made easier by the fact that the Gordon enthusiasm soon subsided among the mass of the population, - an article in the National Review described the vagaries of public opinion at this time, - "the mere outcry of transient emotion, destined to subside as speedily as it had been excited." (1)

Resolutions expressing confidence in the Government, or supporting the campaign in the Sudan, were outnumbered by those calling for the withdrawal of troops. On 27th February only three weeks after the news from Khartoum, Gladstone was forwarding ^{to} Hartington a number of "representations against going to Khartoum." (2) Reginald Brett, Hartington's private secretary also received protests from Liberals. (3) Most Liberal Associations hoped for an early end to the war without directly criticising the Government. The votes of censure passed on some of those Liberals who voted for Northcote's motion of censure in February, were possibly motivated as much by loyalty to the Government as by opposition to the Sudan war. At the meeting of Bradford "400" to reprove W.E.

(1) National Review, July 1885, H.D. Traill, "What is public opinion".

(2) Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS. 44,547, Letter Book 1883-5, Gladstone to Hartington, 27th February 1885.

(3) Reginald Brett, Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, p.145.

Forster for voting against the Government, the discussion mainly centred on the fact that the Government might have been turned out of office as a result of the Northcote motion, though one Liberal, E. Priestman, said "As Liberals they were opposed to an increase in the responsibilities resting on our nation (hear hear) and they were opposed to doing anything which would result in our having to govern vast hordes of barabrians somewhere near the Equator, and involving us in vast military expenditure (applause)" (1)

But although Priestman had grasped the implications of an expansionist policy, at a later meeting he refused to vote for a pro-Arabi resolution "as the resolution involved a condemnation of Mr. Gladstone, and as Mr. Gladstone was not there to state the other, and his side of the question." (2)

Nor did Bradford Liberals take up the suggestion that they might pass a vote of confidence in Illingsworth, the junior member for Bradford, who had voted for Morley's motion.

On the other hand no votes of censure were passed on the Liberal M.P.s who voted for Lawson in 1882, but the Government on that occasion had the tacit support of the Conservatives

(1) Leeds Mercury, 3rd March 1885.

(2) Bradford Observer, 17th March 1885.

and was in no danger of being defeated.

There are eighteen resolutions for February and March 1885, including six from Radical Associations and one from London Junior Liberal Club, which illustrate Liberal attitudes. They comprise seven from the London region, two from Scotland, one from Wales from Merthyr Tydfil (no doubt influenced by Henry Richard), two from Yorkshire, three from Lancashire, two from the Midlands and one from southern England (Southampton). They almost all combined a vote of confidence in the Government with a request for the abandonment of the Sudan campaign, and were cautious about criticising the Government. The Leicester Liberal Association resolution is typical - (this was the first resolution on Egypt and the Sudan passed by a general meeting of Leicester Liberals) - "...this Association whilst regretting the necessity for the military operations in the Soudan, and expressing its admiration of the gallant conduct of the troops, assures Mr. Gladstone and the Government of its confidence and support in the present crisis, and heartily approves of their determination to withdraw the troops at the earliest possible moment." (1) Though Liberals were treading very carefully to avoid embarrassing the Government, it was obvious that they had no liking for the Sudan campaign. A much

(1) MSS. of Leicester Liberal Association, Minutes of General Committee meeting of 24th March 1885.

stronger resolution was passed by the Junior Liberal Association opposing the war as a violation of the principles of 1880. ⁽¹⁾ They had received a letter of support from James Bryce M.P. and there was talk of mobilising opinion in the Junior Liberal Associations in the provinces. Radical Club resolutions were usually much stronger than those from Liberal Associations. Tower Hamlets Radical Association opposed "the cruel massacre now being perpetrated by the British army in the Soudan", and denounced the war as a conflict in the interests of "loanmongers, userers and aristocracy." ⁽²⁾ At Hackney Radical Club "strong feeling against the policy of the Government" was shown during the discussion. ⁽³⁾ The people who were the most radical in home affairs were also those most likely to oppose extension of the Empire.

Some of the 1885 resolutions were not passed without long discussion and disagreement. At Galashiels Liberal Association an Executive Committee resolution urging retirement from the Sudan was reversed a few days later by a meeting of the whole Association. One member said "So long as Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Trevelyan

(1) Debater, 9th March 1885.

(2) Democrat, 7th February 1885.

(3) Ibid, 7th March 1885.

(the local M.P.) were in the Government, though they might do things that seemed strange to them, yet they knew these ministers to be such true friends of peace, retrenchment and reform, that they could never take part in any action really subversive of these cardinal principles." A resolution moved by a Mr. John Grant a bookseller, supporting the Government and urging that friendly tribes in the Sudan might not be deserted, was finally passed after a two hour discussion. (1)

At Kennington Liberal and Radical Association an amendment against the Government's policy in Egypt and the Sudan received only eight votes and a vote of confidence was "carried almost unanimously and with acclamation." (2) Some Liberal Associations in 1885 contented themselves with votes of confidence in the Government without referring to the Sudan problem, or mentioning it in the terms of a Leeds resolution "that only those steps will be taken in prosecuting the necessary war, which are dictated by wise and humane feelings." (3)

Nor was a desire to leave the Sudan always combined

(1) Scotsman, 20th February, 27th February 1885.

(2) Daily News, 18th March 1885.

(3) Leeds Mercury, 13th February 1885.

with a desire to evacuate Egypt. The addition of Egypt to the Empire was gradually and imperceptibly becoming accepted by Liberals. Worcester Liberals wanted the removal of troops only after good government had been established. (1) South Salford Liberals urged withdrawal from the Sudan, but only envisaged stability in Egypt. (2) Wimbledon and Merton Radical Association were in agreement with the obligation to restore peace in Egypt. (3) It was obvious that the Government had no immediate plans for evacuation, and Liberals were growing used to accepting the occupation as semi-permanent. Chamberlain had always argued "We cannot leave anarchy behind us, and we have to see that our interference has produced some real benefit for the Egyptian people;" (4) this was combined with a good resolution to leave at some indeterminate point in the future. The policy was to be "fair chance of tranquillity and then clear out..." (5) But the chance of

(1) Birmingham Daily Post, 26th February 1885.

(2) Manchester Guardian, 5th March 1885.

(3) Daily News, 11th March 1885.

(4) Chamberlain MSS. JC 5/54/428-602, Morley correspondence, Chamberlain to Morley 31st March 1883.

(5) JC 5/50/12-19, Labouchere correspondence, Chamberlain to Labouchere 10th February 1884.

tranquillity always seemed as far away as ever. By 1885 a Staffordshire M.P. Henry Wiggin, while approving of the retirement from the Sudan, and admitting that "He had never been able to ascertain for what purpose Alexandria was bombarded..." said "...all our efforts in Egypt would have to be devoted to the restoration of law and order in that country, until which had been achieved he hoped that no English statesman would think of leaving Egypt, (cheers)." (1) Speakers at a Liberal meeting in Stechford likewise urged that the British should stay in Egypt till good government had been established, (2) and the Manchester Guardian leader agreed "it would be in the highest degree unsafe as well as immoral for us to clear out of Egypt without having taken ample security for the better government of the country." (3) The Liberal eagerness to carry representative institutions and sound administration to other parts of the globe, was providing a practical excuse for Imperialism in Africa.

(1) Birmingham Daily Post, 14th August 1885.

(2) Ibid, 10th March 1885.

(3) Manchester Guardian,

In fact at this time some Liberals became pervaded with the Imperialist ethos. Isaac Holden M.P. replied to Keighley Radical Club which asked him to present its petition against the Sudan war, - "We have a great Empire to hold together, and I would not confide it to a Tory Government." (1) This was exactly the Tory argument against the Liberals in reverse. Other Liberals were beginning to speak in the accents of Imperialism. Few went as far as Ince Liberals who, on the news of the fall of Khartoum urged "Let us be Englishmen first and party politicians afterwards." (2) But arguments about prestige and honour were heard at Handsworth, Leeds and Galashiels. (3) Radicals like F.A. Channing, who held strong views on land reform and House of Lords reform, talked unselfconsciously of the "Anglo-Saxon race" and defended Gladstone's action in Egypt. (4) A speaker at Denholme Liberal Association in Yorkshire announced proudly to cheers that

(1) Bradford Observer, 28th February 1885.

(2) Manchester Guardian, 13th February 1885.

(3) Birmingham Daily Post, 11th February 1885.
Leeds Mercury, 25th February 1885.
Scotsman, 27th February 1885.

(4) F.A. Channing, Memories of Midland Politics 1885-1910, London 1918, p.143.

Gladstone had never "lacked pride in the maintenance of the honour and integrity of the Empire." (1) Possibly only the Empire of self-governing colonies was implied here, but Liberals were beginning to actively extol the virtues of an Imperialist stand and this position could easily lead to support for the extension of the Empire.

A few Liberal M.Ps. took up an Imperialist position over the Sudan. On 29th February 1885, twelve of them voted for Northcote's motion of censure. They included Joseph Cowen M.P. for Newcastle on Tyne who had made the transition from advanced Radical Republicanism to Imperialism. The owner of the Newcastle Chronicle, Cowen in his youth had been an ardent supporter of Mazzini and of Liberal revolutions abroad as well as an advocate of social reforms at home. In 1876 he had spoken against the Royal titles Bill as an "attempt to fasten onto the constitution a military and autocratic figurehead." (2) But by 1878, the threat from Russia had made him a partisan of the Conservatives over the Eastern Question declaring "before he was a political partisan he was a patriot, and that before he was a Radical he was an Englishman." (3)

He favoured a permanent and stable occupation

(1) Bradford Observer, 27th March 1885.

(2) William Duncan, Life of Joseph Cowen, Newcastle 1904, pp.88-9.

(3) Ibid, p.97.

of Egypt arguing that "the British supremacy was as surely settled on the banks of the Nile as on the banks of the Ganges." (1) His opinions were not supported by the local Liberal caucus, and after frequent disagreements he decided not to stand for Parliament again in 1885. By 1886 he was speaking regularly in the accents of Imperialism, "The Imperial sentiment is incarnate, is ineradicable, in Englishmen. It will only die with the extinction of the race. The man would be a traitor, not only to his country, but to civilization, who would attempt to break up an organisation which has conferred such inestimable benefits on the human race." (2) Cowen's early enthusiasm to see the diffusion of Liberal values abroad, had gradually become an assertion that British civilization should be spread by Imperialist expansion.

Two of the other Imperialist Liberals, W.E. Forster and Albert Grey belonged to the humanitarian group of Imperialists - Grey in 1889 became a director of Rhodes' South Africa Company. Viscount Goschen (M.P. for Ripon) was known as an advocate of the holders of Egyptian bonds. There were four

(1) Ibid, p.144.

(2) Ibid, p.156.

other Yorkshire M.Ps. Greyke, J.C. Dundas and two of the Fitzwilliam brothers. The remaining four rebels were the third Fitzwilliam who sat for Peterborough, G. Courtauld M.P. for Maldon in Essex, W. Nicholson M.P. for Petersfield in Hampshire and Laign M.P. for Orkney and Shetland. Laign had spent many years in India and had been conditioned to reject the possibility of self-government for semi-civilized peoples such as the Egyptians. He was conscious of the importance of the Empire, - he considered that the Liberal policy in the Sudan "was writing the first chapters of the Decline and Fall of the British Empire." (1)

Some of the Imperialist Liberals, - Goschen, Selborne, Hartington and Northbrook followed Chamberlain out of the Liberal Party in 1886 over the Irish Home Rule question. Forster died in the same year and Cowen left active politics. But other Imperialist remained, - notably the Earl of Rosebery whose attachment to the Empire had been confirmed by his visit to Australia in 1884 and who openly extolled the virtues of a democratic Liberal Imperialism in 1885. (2) He was later as Foreign Secretary to accept tropical Africa into the scheme of Liberal Imperialism as well.

(1) Hansard, 3rd series, Vol CCLXXXV111, col.93.

(2) R.R. James, Rosebery, London 1963, p.158.

The Conference of the National Liberal Federation, held at Birmingham on 17th April 1885 to discuss the Sudan War, revealed a growing gulf between those Liberals who took literally a "peace, retrenchment and reform" creed, and those who, partly out an anxiety to keep in step with the leadership were beginning to accept the assumptions of Imperialism. This meeting appears to have been convened after the Northern Liberal Associations showed signs of unrest at the Sudan War,⁽¹⁾ and Robert Spence Watson the Newcastle Liberal Quaker said, In the North of England ...they did not see any pretext for continuing a war which would add to the already heavy miseries of a brave if barbarous people."⁽²⁾ Spence Watson's resolution was a mild one hoping that troops would soon be withdrawn from the Sudan, and in fact it did not go far enough for a Sudnerland delegate who more strongly urged immediate withdrawal of the troops.⁽³⁾ But a further amendment was proposed by Admiral Maxse, reinforcing the meeting's confidence in Gladstone and Watson had to be content to tack his original motion onto the end of this. This

(1) M. Ostrogorski, Democracy and the organisation of political parties, London 1902, Vol 1, p.217.

(2) Daily News, 18th April 1885.

(3) Ibid.

resolution was then passed by a large majority, one hundred and seven votes to five. (1) The Northern Liberals had not really swung the Conference; Watson referred to "the able, but rather too adroit tactics, which were displayed by the small party present who thirsted for more war." (2) This section may have been helped by the fact that Sir James Kitson, who was not a member of the peace party and was known as an Imperialist by 1899, presided.

There is no doubt that there would have been more Liberal opposition to the Sudan War and to the occupation of Egypt had not a Liberal Government been in power. But this period 1882 to 1885 marks the beginning of Liberal acquiescence in expansion in Africa, - the sort of Imperialist aggression which they had been returned to oppose in 1880. This was particularly obvious with the acceptance of the Egyptian occupation, which contrasted with the greater opposition to the Transvaal War in 1881. The Radicals in the Cabinet, mainly it seems to score off the Whigs and assert their own policy on Irish questions, (3) stood out against the conquest of the Transvaal

(1) Robert Spence Watson, The National Liberal Federation, London 1907, nos. 48-9.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Robinson, Gallagher and Denny, Op cit, p.70.

in 1881, whereas they approved of the invasion of Egypt in 1882. There were other differences. The Boers qualified as a legitimate nationality, - they were a white republic; Egypt on the other hand was only semi-civilized and the Arabist rebellion led by the army, did not seem to offer any improvement on the rule of the Khedive. Liberals could not presume to teach a Dutch Republic the value of Parliamentary institutions in the way that they could the Egyptians. It also possibly seemed that Egypt was more of a threat to the Suez Canal and its trade, than the inland Boer republic could be to the Cape route. The Dutch Republics had no access to the sea, were known to be relatively impoverished and were divided from the Cape route by hundreds of miles of British colony. Of course they constituted a barrier to the interior of Central Africa, but Liberals had not yet begun to think in terms of a Cape-Cairo route. It needed a much bolder strategy to attack an independent white state which was capable of fighting for its independence, than to occupy a native state which had been subject in any case to British financial interference for years.

It is difficult to separate the mass of working class opinion in 1882-5 from that of Liberal/Radical Associations or dissenting churches. Reynolds News claimed that working class

opinion favoured a withdrawal from the Sudan, ⁽¹⁾ and the London working class radicals played an important part in peace organisation, (see below). Thomas Burt wrote of the miners in north-east England in 1882, - "they..are... Radical almost to a man...they are strongly and nearly unanimously opposed to aggressive war and to a spirited foreign policy." In the Afghanistan, Transvaal and Zulu wars "nowhere was the anti-jingo feeling more general and conspicuous than amongst the agricultural labourers and miners." ⁽²⁾ He analysed articulate working class opinion in 1882, - "Though the great majority of the people have no doubt supported the Government policy in Egypt, the support has been neither unanimous nor enthusiastic. Large numbers of working men, - including some of the most thoughtful and intelligent in the ranks of the Radical party, - were from the first strongly averse to armed intervention. In London several conferences were held, to which many of the Democratic and working men's clubs sent delegates, and at these meetings resolutions were unanimously adopted in favour of peace. A large sprinkling of the leading trades unionists of the

(1) Reynolds News, 15th February 1885.

(2) Fortnightly Review, T. Burt, op cit, p.725.

country were opposed to war....great numbers who approved or acquiesced, would have been determined opponents but for two things: they did not know how far Arabi was accepted as the leader of a real national movement to secure self-government in Egypt, or how far he was a mere military adventurer, aiming to establish a military despotism." (1)

Extreme Radicals and Socialists expressed the strongest opposition to the Government. They discounted strategic and philanthropic motives for intervention which they attributed to the direct self-interest of financial speculators, especially the Egyptian bondholders. The Labour Emancipation League (one of the first Socialist organisations to develop in the 1880's which operated in Mile End), protested in 1884 "against the continued employment of British troops and the expenditure of the tax producers' money in the interests of the bondholders." (2) The Manhood Suffrage League in 1885 thought "the present war in the Soudan is an outrage on the liberty of the Soudanese Africans...in the interests of Jewish and other bondholders." (3) Expansion in Africa was firmly related to the economic interests of

(1) Ibid, p.726.

(2) F.O. 78/3710, Egypt, domestic and various, 23rd February -12th March 1884, resolution of 3rd March 1884.

(3) Democrat, 14th February 1885.

capitalism. The Social-Democratic Federation in 1884 objected to an expedition to the Sudan "under the pretence of rescuing Gordon, but really for the purpose of annexing the country and establishing capitalist domination throughout the Soudan." (1) A number of S.D.F. branches passed resolutions against the Sudan campaign in 1885, including one from Salford which stated "there would be no Egyptian problem without English and Jewish speculators. Working men had no quarrel with the Arabs." (2) The S.D.F. made some attempt to establish solidarity with the Egyptians, "The cause of the oppressed Egyptian peasants is the cause of the wage earners of England." (3) The Socialist League strongly denounced the Sudan expedition as armed robbery, - "...every English soldier that dies in Egypt, is, as a soldier, in the position of a thief who is killed in an attempt to commit murder." (4)

Socialist organisations represented only a minority of the population. A larger and important element in the

(1) Justice, 24th May 1884.

(2) Salford Weekly News, February 1885.

(3) Justice, 26th January 1884.

(4) Commonweal, February 1885.

Liberal Party were the Nonconformists. The Nonconformists and the Church of England were separated on political lines, - the Established Church was largely committed to Conservatism while the Nonconformists from 1874 had looked to the Liberals to provide educational reform, temperance reform and the social improvements envisaged by trades unionists. By 1882 the Church of England was sharing in the development of Imperialist sentiment within the Conservative Party. The hierarchy in 1882 showed a well-developed sense of the Imperial responsibility, - a paper sent after Tel-el-Kebir to all Bishops read, - "The signal success which has been given to our army in Egypt, demands the thankful acknowledgements of the English people to God, who has endowed our generals with skill and forethought, our soldiers with discipline and our whole army with valour. Anarchy in Egypt meant dangers to that wide Empire which we have received as a trust, and which we may not abandon; and our war against anarchy was an inevitable war." (1) A prayer of thanksgiving to be inserted in church services, read, "We glorify thee for the late victory granted to our army, whereby, as in a moment, peace has been restored to Egypt, the highway between England

(1) Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS. 44,476, General correspondence, Archbishop of York to Gladstone, 18th September 1882.

and our Indian Empire has been made safe, and the pursuits of peace have already been regained by the Egyptian people." (1) In 1884 the Archbishop of Canterbury to Gladstone's embarrassment suggested that public prayers should be said for Gordon's safety, (2) and after the fall of Khartoum many services were held in Gordon's memory.

The Church of England at home was also influenced by the opinion of its missions. The Church Missionary Society in Uganda was beginning to feel that assistance from the British Government would be an advantage. They had a particular interest in Gordon's anti-slavery work in the Sudan, just to the north of their territory. Canon Hoare at an anniversary meeting in 1884 made a direct comparison between the position of Gordon and the position of the missionaries and did not hesitate to take an anti-Government stand. He said "I cannot but think of that brave, gallant servant of God at Khartoum (cheers) that brave man for whom I hope that England is praying, and who ought to be remembered every time we kneel with our families before God. I have thought of that man, and I believe I am not treading on dangerous ground when I say that all England is

(1) Ibid.

(2) ADD.MSS 44,547, letter book, Gladstone to Archbishop of Canterbury 12th May 1884.

ashamed (loud cheers), ...all England is ashamed that such a man as that, sent out by England to do her work should be left by England unsupported, undefended at Khartoum (renewed cheers). You may what has this to do with missions? It has a great deal to do with them...You have sent out brave men to Uganda. Are you going to leave them alone there? You have sent out Mr. Last and Mr. Cole into the heart of these great African forests. Are we going to leave them alone there? They that sent them must they not uphold them? (cheers)" (1) Ostensibly he meant only financial and moral support, but by 1886 the C.M.S. were hoping for diplomatic and even military aid in Uganda. Also by 1885 they were planning to extend their activities to the Sudan with a Gordon Memorial Mission, and were therefore committed to support Wolseley's expedition and to oppose evacuation.

Nonconformists on the other hand tended to be anti-Imperialist. It could not be disguised that differences of opinion existed between Gladstone and the Nonconformists in 1882, though they tended to adopt the usual Liberal excuses for the Government. As J.O. Rogers wrote "In

(1) Church Missionary Intelligencer, June 1884.

general Nonconformists were disposed, if not to approve of the interference in Egypt at all, to believe that it was forced upon the Cabinet by the special circumstances of the time..." (1)

Nonconformists were noted for their special attachment to Gladstone, - for example at a Congregationalist gathering in 1885, when a resolution of confidence in the Prime Minister was moved, - "At the mention of his name, the hundreds present sprang to their feet, and it was a little time before the subsidence of the cheering allowed me to continue." (2)

Like most Liberals, Nonconformists rejected the claims of Egyptian nationalism, - even Quakers thought that the object of the war "was to put down a military usurper, whose unchecked power was regarded as extremely dangerous." (3) Some Quakers were not over impressed by Bright's resignation, - an editorial in the Friend remarked "We are thankful that John Bright has retired from the Cabinet but we are not inclined to reproach those whom he has left

(1) J.G. Rogers, Autobiography, London 1903, p.225.

(2) Nineteenth Century, June 1885, J.G. Rogers, "Mr. Gladstone as a Foreign Minister," p.924.

(3) Friend, October 1882.

behind," (1) Durham Society of Friends sent a letter of sympathy to Bright, but did not comment on the Government's policy, (2) while the Meeting for Sufferings (3) after much discussion concluded "though there was no want of unanimity as to the unrighteousness of this, as of all wars, much difference of opinion existed as to the wisdom of issuing any document by way of protest." (4)

Only one or two protests from individual Nonconformist ministers, who wrote to the periodicals, broke the silence of the Nonconformists; as the Echo remarked "Men who roared like lions against a Tory ministry are now as harmless as sucking doves." (5) The Congregational Union meeting in October was noticable for "the almost complete abstinence of reference to political and other

(1) Ibid, August 1882.

(2) Manchester Guardian, August 1882.

(3) The Meeting for Sufferings met in London regularly during the year.

(4) Friend, October 1882.

(5) Echo, 12th July 1882.

public questions, - the result of...the known division of opinion which exists in the body with regard to the Egyptian war." (1)

The general silence masked a good deal of uneasiness, and there was little outright approval of the Government's policy. As in 1881 the Methodist Recorder among the periodicals came out most strongly in support of the Government, - "we think we may fairly affirm that this is a just and necessary war, undertaken in no mercenary or aggressive spirit for the sake of gain or glory, but for great public purposes and interests." (2) Unlike Conservative supporters of the war, Nonconformists felt it imperative to reject arguments of prestige in favour of those stressing serious and enlightened responsibility. Resolutions were sent from the Bible Christians at Plymouth supporting the Government, (3) and a Gospel Temperance meeting at Leicester attributed the victory over the Egyptians to the fact that "God was on our side" (4) but these instances were

(1) Chamberlain MSS. JC 5/54/428-603, Morley correspondence, Morley to Chamberlain, October 1882.

(2) Methodist Recorder, 18th August 1882.

(3) Echo, 31st July 1882.

(4) Friend, October 1882.

not typical.

Nonconformist activity closely paralleled that of Liberal Associations; protests were missing in 1882, but grew in 1884-5, reaching a peak after the fall of Khartoum. The Quaker provincial Monthly Meetings began to move against the Sudan War. The Newcastle Meeting passed a resolution,⁽¹⁾ and Friends at Brighouse issued an address against the war for circulation in Yorkshire.⁽²⁾ The March 1885 Meeting for Sufferings received minutes from Northampton, Pickering and Hull referring to the "crime which will attend the continuation of hostilities for any purpose, but especially for annexation and revenge."⁽³⁾ The Meeting for Sufferings had been asked to put pressure on the Government, but the discussion was at first prevaricating, - "...some protested against interfering with any war during its progress. Others contended that it was beyond our sphere to address the Government on the special features of any particular war: all war was wrong and by emphasising the marked injustice of one, we may appear

(1) Darlington Northern Echo, 25th February 1885.

(2) Friend, March & April 1885.

(3) Ibid, April 1885.

Society of Friends MSS. Society of Friends Library, Minutes of Meetings for Sufferings, Vol 49, 1875-85, Minutes of meeting held on 6th March 1885.

to justify another. A few believed that our past neglect.. would render futile anything that might now be attempted.. Evidently the prevailing feeling was against in any way memorialising the Government." (1) But three weeks later the anti-war section obviously appeared in more strength, and swung the meeting in favour of sending a memorial to Gladstone, condemning the war as contrary to the spirit of Christianity and international morality. (2)

The Nonconformists in 1884 began to protest against the impending Gordon rescue expedition. For example the Primitive Methodists of the Salisbury district were becoming anxious about "the sacrifice of thousands of Arab and British lives in the Soudan." (3) Leading Nonconformists such as Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell of Nottingham began to write letters of protest, (4) and Rev. Newman Hall who had written to Gladstone in 1882 expressing "unabated confidence" began objecting to the Sudan War. (5)

(1) Ibid, and minutes of meeting held 27th March 1885.

(2) Ibid.

(3) F.O. 78/2712, Egypt, domestic and various, 1st April-5th May 1884.

(4) See Baptist, March-May 1884, Echo, 12th June 1884.

(5) Newman Hall, Autobiography, London 1898, pps. 278-9.

The editorial of the Nonconformist and Independent was beginning to regret the series of Egyptian complications and take consolation from the hope that the Franchise Bill would produce "a House of Commons that will make short work of Jingoism under whatever disguise." (1)

In 1885 Reginald Brett regarded the Dissenters as the main force behind the opposition to the war in 1885. (2) Protest came from local churches or groups of churches, rather than from national leaders such as Rogers, J. Clifford (a leading Baptist) or W. Dale (a Birmingham minister and friend of Chamberlain). A private meeting of Nonconformists in London for example, was reported to have broken up without coming to any decision on the war. (3) Majority opinion in the periodicals, however, was definitely anti-war. The Nonconformist and Independent, Baptist and Primitive Methodist urged the withdrawal of forces from the Sudan and encouraged readers to make their opinion felt. Only the Wesleyan Methodist periodical Methodist Times, edited by Hugh Price Hughes diverged from the consensus in supporting the war. (4) It hoped that the forces would not

(1) Nonconformist and Independent, 13th March 1884.

(2) Reginald Brett, Op cit, pps. 109-110.

(3) Echo 5th February 1885.

(4) The Wesleyan Methodists were the most apolitical of the Nonconformists and the most recent converts from Conservatism to Liberalism.

retire "...until our troops have occupied Khartoum and have broken the power of the Mahdi as far as the north and east of the Soudan are concerned." (1) But even Hugh Price Hughes was wary about advocating a permanent occupation and by the end of April joined in the general relief that the forces had been withdrawn. (2)

Twelve protests in February and March indicate the themes of Nonconformist anti-Imperialism. Four came from widely representative bodies, - the pastors and delegates of Cheshire and West Lancashire Baptist Churches, (3) a conference of Birmingham Unitarians, Presbyterians and other Nonconformists, (4) Yorkshire Congregational Union and thirty four London Congregational ministers. (5) The other resolutions were more or less equally divided between Congregationalist and Baptist Congregations. (6)

(1) Methodist Times, 19th February 1885.

(2) Ibid, 30th April 1885.

(3) F.O. 78/3839, Egypt domestic and various, March 1885.

(4) Reynolds News, 19th April 1885.

(5) Methodist Times, 26th March 1885.

(6) It seems likely from the tone of the periodicals that a number of protests were made which were not reported, or which were sent direct to Gladstone - and have not been preserved in his papers.

The content of Nonconformist resolutions showed considerable identification of the dissenters with the Arabs in their struggle for freedom. Newman Hall put this view specifically when he wrote "I feel no doubt that you will utter your protest against an English army marching to fight Arab Nonconformists who refuse longer to submit to an intolerable tyranny." ⁽¹⁾ Nonconformists were doubtless influenced by Gladstone's description of the Mahdists as a people struggling to be free, and they could also refer to Gordon's sympathies with the Arab revolt against the Egyptians. But dissenters in England feeling themselves underprivileged in comparison with the Established Church, would tend to identify with oppressed peoples abroad. The Arab struggle against the Egyptian Pashas could find its parallel in the Nonconformist fight against the Conservative Establishment. Hence they referred to the Sudanese as "a brave nation resisting oppression," ⁽²⁾ "Brave men fighting for their independence," ⁽³⁾ and felt that we "ought to retire..

(1) Nonconformist and Independent, 28th February 1884.

(2) Ibid, 26th February 1885.

(3) Ibid.

and leave the Soudanese to the enjoyment of their dear bought liberty." (1)

As the Mahdists were fanatical Mohammedans, Nonconformists might have been expected to oppose them on religious grounds, but there was no sign of this attitude except in one sermon in an Ipswich Congregational Church. (2) Nonconformists were not so eager as the Church of England to convert Africa to Christianity; they had one mission, the London Missionary Society, operating in East and South Africa, but the churches at home were not so strongly pervaded with missionary attitudes, as the Established Church. Nonconformists may have felt that they had more concept of religious freedom, - and of other varieties of freedom, - than the Church of England. 1885 was a striking contrast with 1882, when the majority of Nonconformists had denied that the Arabist movement was a popular nationalist uprising. Possibly in 1882 they had been more impressed with arguments about national interest, and by the opinion

(1) Primitive Methodist, 9th April 1885.

(2) Nonconformist and Independent, 26th February 1885.

of the Liberal leadership on Arabi; - they were not wholly out of step with the leadership in 1885, in their sympathy with the Mahdists, since Gladstone had resisted pressure for even a Gordon relief expedition for some time. Nonconformists distinguished between acceptable and non-acceptable Imperialism; the Sudan came into the latter category, while Egypt had belonged to the former. In 1885 Cheshire and West Lancashire Baptist Churches, while urging the withdrawal of troops from the Sudan, supported the Government policy against Russia; it was legitimate to protect "our Indian Empire" but wrong to take over new territories in Central Africa. (1)

The Nonconformist view was essentially a moralistic one, full of antipathy to aggression abroad and meddling in the affairs of other nations. It was a classic restatement of the Midlothian case against the Conservative Government. As one Nonconformist minister put it, - "I adhere right through to peace, non-intervention, the independence of peoples and the sinfulness of mercenary bloodshed." (2) Expansion in tropical Africa conflicted with a pacific moral code.

(1) F.O. 78/3839, Egypt, domestic and various, March 1885.

(2) Echo, 6th August 1882.

There was some disagreement among Nonconformists in 1885, and a minority of letters to the dissenting press supported the Sudan war; these letters often viewed the Sudan as a fragment of the total Empire which must be protected at all costs, "we must bid farewell to the integrity of our Empire, for we should be quite unable to protect the immense commerce which is so great an element in our national prosperity." (1) Henry Richard⁽²⁾ after addressing a meeting of Kettering Liberal Association, asked the pastors of the Baptist, Congregational and Wesleyan chapels to put an anti-war resolution to their congregations at Sunday service. There were differing responses, - the resolution was passed by the Baptist chapel, but most of the Congregationalists refused to vote, while the Wesleyan minister would not put the resolution at all. (3) It was also noted that the response of Baptists and Congregationalists to an invitation to attend a London peace meeting had been poor, (4)

(1) Nonconformist & Independent, 9th April 1885.

(2) Henry Richard was the son of a Calvinistic Methodist minister and had himself been a Congregationalist minister before devoting himself to politics, see Lewis Appleton, Henry Richard, Apostle of Peace, London 1889.

(3) Baptist, 27th February 1885.

(4) Methodist Times, 9th April 1885.

but since it was chaired by Bradlaugh, and other secularists were present, this was hardly surprising.

On the whole then, Nonconformists resisted expansion in the Sudan in 1885. There was thus a direct correlation between anti-Imperialism, membership of dissenting religions and political Liberalism; just as on the other hand Conservatism and membership of the Established Church were coming to be identified with an Imperialist ethos.

The organised anti-expansionist movement in 1882 to 1885 centred around a combination of radical clubs and workingmen's associations, a few of the more vociferously anti-Imperialist M.Ps., Positivists and members of the three peace societies. Among the individuals who played an important part Wilfred Scawen Blunt stands out. He was a rather dilettante Tory Democrat, a Home Ruler, an Arabophile who owned an estate in Egypt, and an anti-Imperialist who opposed the Government from the very beginning of its intervention in Egypt. He did not fit into the usual anti-Imperialist mould, - he was a Catholic landowner, a non-Liberal who despised Gladstone as "a pedant, a babbler and an incompetent old fool." (1)

(1) W.S. Blunt, Gordon at Khartoum, p.362.

He was more personally involved in a pro-Arab stand than the rest of the peace party, - his attitude can be summed up in some comments written in January 1885, - "These English soldiers are mere murderers and I confess I would rather see them all at perdition than that a single Arab should die. What are they ? A mongrel scum of thieves from Whitechapel and Seven Dials, commanded by young fellows whose ideal is the green room at the Gaiety, - without beliefs, without traditions....On the otherside, men with the memory of a thousand years of freedom, with chivalry inherited from the Saracens, the noblost of ancestors with a creed the purest the world ever knew...I desire to see their blood avenged." (1) Unlike most of his fellow countrymen, Blunt was a strong supporter of the Arabist revolt in 1882, and wrote a number of times to Gladstone trying unsuccessfully to convert him to the view that Arabi represented Egyptian popular opinion. (2) He arranged and partly paid for, Arabi's defence in the trial of the Egyptian rebels in October. (3) A barrister A.M. Broadley was commissioned for the defence; (4) the result of the

(1) Ibid.

(2) Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS.44.110, Blunt to Gladstone 13th May - 16th July 1882.

(3) Ibid., Blunt to Gladstone 11th October 1882.

(4) A.M. Broadley, How we defended Arabi and his friends, London 1884, 2nd edition, pps. 2-6.

trial was that Arabi was exiled to Ceylon. In 1884 and 1885 Blunt was offering to negotiate with the Mahdi, and was in touch with Mahdist agents in Paris and London. ⁽¹⁾ In his pursuit of peace negotiations, he organised a deputation to Hawarden on Christmas Eve 1884, accompanied by two members of the Arbitration movement, Martin Wood and Liberal and Karl Blind, - but Gladstone refused to see them. ⁽²⁾

The Positivists exponents of rational reform and social improvement, took an anti-Imperialist stand. Frederick Harrison's ideas were fully set out in a letter to Morley in 1882. The war in Egypt was "a typical instance of unjustifiable aggression ... I do not refuse to consider either the safety of the British residents or the neutrality and safety of the Canal. Any means honestly directed to secure either object I should regard as reasonable and to be discussed on its merits. The course taken by our Government is totally beside these two objects and is exceedingly prejudicial to both." ⁽³⁾ He thus agreed with most Liberals that Egypt was a sensitive

(1) ADD.MDD. 44,110, Blunt to Gladstone, 12th March, 8th April 1885.

In 1885 the Foreign Office received a few anxious letters referring to the presence of the Mahdi's emissaries in England; a clergyman writing to the Daily News, 7th February 1885, claimed to have knowledge of them.

(2) W.S. Blunt, Gordon at Khartoum, p.356.

(3) Frederick Harrison MSS. Harrison to Morley 3rd June 1882.

area as far as British interests were concerned, but diverged in thinking that national interests were not endangered by the Nationalist rebellion. He had no sympathy for Arabi however, - "I am not convinced by Blunt. But I think him and his party to be certainly not worse than other Egyptian statesmen and parties...But I totally decline to lift a finger for him, or to urge any Englishman to do so. I am for leaving him and Tewfik to settle it, sending gunboats and marines if needful to guard the Canal, and offering asylum to British residents who wish to fly." (1) He agreed with the view held by most opponents of the war, that intervention was proposed solely in the interests of the bondholders, - "High interests of state are the pretext for intervention. But the true object is to get the gamblers' seven percent paid a little longer." (2)

In this last view he was supported by the Echo which stated "though strenuous efforts have been made to show that the war is not a bondholders war, these efforts have not been successful." (3) Opponents of the war related

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Echo, 28th July 1882.

its origins to the history of financial intervention in Egypt. A lecturer at South Place Ethical Society traced the Arabist revolt to the Dual Control and "the machinations of those wicked Jews, Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Goschen." (1)

A further argument against the war was that it worsened international relations, especially by increasing the possibility of war with France, who found herself excluded from the Egyptian settlement. (2)

Isolationist and non-interventionist views resulted from a conviction that interference abroad left fewer resources to be spent at home, "We may deplore the fate of the women and children in Sinkat, but their fate is not to be deplored in any sense more than that of our own people, who die by the hedges and ditches or in fetid dens...A few millions are always ready for South Africa or Egypt or for any expedition providing it is for the benefit of someone a long way off." (3)

These attitudes were included in the framework of a final moralistic judgement, - the war "violated the status quo, violated international law, and was inconsistent with the principles of justice and the welfare of humanity..." (4)

(1) B. Fossett Lock, England and Egypt, 1882. p.28.

(2) The war in Egypt, why are we fighting? Workmen's Peace Association pamphlet 1882.

(3) Reynolds Newspaper, 24th February 1884.

(4) F.O. 78/3474, resolution sent 24th July 1882.

Anti-war organisation 1882-5.

Anti-war organisation in 1882 was mainly confined to a combination of radical associations with a few M.Ps. The most active M.Ps. were Lawson, Henry Richard, Passmore Edwards, Leonard Courtney, Alfred Illingworth, J.P. Thomasson, G. Palmer, F. Pennington (Stockport), T.C. Thompson (Durham), D.J. Jenkins (Penryn) C. Dillwyn (Swansea) and two Scottish M.Ps. D. Peddie and D. Wedderburn. Outside Parliament were Blunt, Harrison, G.B. Clark and Auberon Herbert, an aristocratic devotee of Herbert Spencer.

The agitation in London began on 20th June with a conference at the Westminster Palace Hotel of working men and members of Parliament which was organised by the Workmen's Peace Association. (1)

(1) Daily News, 21st June 1882.

A further meeting on 14th July, condemned the bombardment of Alexandria as in the bondholders' interest, and stated that the Government was moving in the paths of Toryism and militarism. (1) At these meetings working men proposed the resolutions and contributed a good deal to the discussion. At the second meeting it was decided to appoint an Egyptian Committee to organise further agitation. Lawson was chairman, Passmore Edwards the treasurer and Clark and J. Rowland secretaries. (2) Committee members included representatives of London political clubs.

On 27th July it arranged a meeting in the Memorial Hall where a resolution against the war was passed, in spite of some pro-Gladstone amendments. (3) Another public meeting was held successfully in Kensington at the end of August, (4) and the committee in October tried to deputise Gladstone on the subject of Arabi and the future of Egypt. (5)

(1) Ibid, 15th July 1882.

(2) Echo, 4th August 1882.

(3) Daily News, 28th July 1882.

(4) F.O. 78/3476, Egypt, domestic and various, 1st-14th Sept. 1882, resolution dated 1st Sept. 1882.

(5) F.O. 78/3478, Egypt, domestic and various, October 1882, Egyptian Committee to Granville, 18th October 1882.

There was also the Anti-Aggression League which was originally formed early in 1882, on the initiative of Herbert Spencer after meetings at the home of Lord Hobhouse. (1) About thirty-six M.Ps. and forty other public men were initially on the council, but, according to Frederick Harrison, much of the membership had become less enthusiastic by June, - a reflection of the Liberal dilemma over Egypt. (2) Harrison spoke to a meeting of the League in June, affirming Midlothian principles and belief in social reform at home, and taking a firm stand against the new Imperialism by declaring, - "The Empire is a great deal too big and scattered and composite in itself to need any increase." (3) The meeting included representatives of Trades Unions, Co-operative Societies and working men's clubs. By the end of July, however, the initiative seemed to have passed to the Egyptian Committee.

The Peace Societies played a large part in anti-war agitation. The longest established was the Peace Society formed in 1824, which was mainly Nonconformist and Quaker in composition, - its presidents were frequently drawn

(1) Lord Hobhouse, 1819-1904, was a Judge and advanced Liberal.

(2) Frederick Harrison, Autobiographical Memoirs, London 1911, Vol 2, pp.121-3.

(3) Nonconformist & Independent, 29th June 1882.

from the Quaker Sturge and Pease families. The Workmen's Peace Association was organised by Thomas Burt, W. Cremer and Howard Evans. The youngest of the three peace societies was the International Arbitration and Peace Association, formed in 1881; it included Liberals such as G.B. Clark and Hodgson Pratt and had links with European peace organisations.

In Birmingham the local peace society, the Midlands Arbitration Union, held a meeting against the war in June. ⁽¹⁾ It had contacts with local Liberals, - Arthur O'Neill one of its members was also the secretary of the Birmingham Reform League which sent a resolution to the Foreign Office in October, urging self-government for Egypt. ⁽²⁾ A meeting was held on 8th August presided over by Joseph Sturge and attended by some Liberals; the Borough Coroner sent a letter describing the war as "unjust, cowardly and wicked." ⁽³⁾

The Manchester and Liverpool Peace Societies sent in anti-war resolutions, ⁽⁴⁾ and Derby branch of the

(1) F.O. 78/3470, Egypt, domestic and various, June 1882, Midlands Arbitration Union to F.O. 30th June 1882.

(2) F.O. 78/3478, Egypt, domestic and various, October 1882, Birmingham Reform League to F.O. 19th October 1882.

(3) Birmingham Daily Post, 9th August 1882.

(4) F.O. 78/3471, Egypt, domestic and various, 1st-15th July 1882, Manchester Peace Society to F.O. 6th July 1882.
F.O. 78/3470, op cit, Liverpool Peace Society to F.O. 10th June 1882.

Workmen's Peace Association intended "to strengthen the hands of the Government, by showing that the majority of people in this country will support a policy of peace and non-intervention." (1)

The only other town to hold an anti-war meeting in 1882, was Newcastle-on-Tyne, where a resolution was unanimously passed against intervention. The head of a local shipping firm presided, but there was no indication in the Newcastle press as to how far Liberals were represented at the meeting. (2)

The peace societies continued to be active in 1884. The I.A.P.A. held a three day conference at the end of April opposing the occupation of Egypt, but it did not carry all Liberal M.Ps. with it. A resolution calling for reforms in Egypt and the neutralisation of the Suez Canal was carried unanimously, but there was considerable disagreement over a resolution condemning "interference in the internal affairs of Egypt as unnecessary, impolitic and unjust," and hoping for immediate retirement. (3) W. Agnew

(1) F.O. 78/3470, op cit, Derby branch of Workmen's Peace Association to F.O. 30th June 1882.

(2) Ibid, resolution sent 22nd June 1882.
Newcastle Daily Chronicle, 22nd June 1882.

(3) F.O. 78/3712, Egypt, domestic and various, April-May 1884,
I.A.P.A. to F.O. 5th May 1884.

M.P. for South-East Lancashire and F.W. Buxton M.P. for Andover, defended the Government on the grounds that it had had no option but to occupy Egypt. ⁽¹⁾ H. Villiers-Stuart M.P. for Waterford who presided, even thought that help should be sent to Gordon if necessary and reforms made in the Sudan. G.B. Clark's resolution that no forces should be sent was passed by only seven votes. ⁽²⁾

The I.A.P.A. had sent a resolution to the Foreign Office in February 1884 against intervention in the Sudan. ⁽³⁾ The peace societies unlike most Liberals did not make a sharp distinction between the Egypt and Sudan problems. They saw the Sudan imbroglio as the direct result of the meddling policy of 1882, - as the I.A.P.A. put it in 1885, - the fall of Khartoum was "the retributive consequence of the bombardment of Alexandria." ⁽⁴⁾

The Peace Society in 1884 reported that memorials had been sent to the Government and meetings held. ⁽⁵⁾

(1) The Times, 30th April 1884.

(2) F.O. 78/3712, op cit.

(3) F.O. 78/3709, Egypt, domestic and various, 25th Jan. - 22nd February 1884, I.A.P.A. to F.O. 15th February 1884.

(4) International Arbitration & Peace Association, Monthly Journal, February 1885.

(5) Echo, 22nd May 1884.

In Birmingham the Anti-war Vigilance Committee, (1) was circulating a letter for signature against the Sudan War, and advising, "kindly write a memorial on plain paper, get it signed and send it to Mr. Gladstone..." (2)

Manchester Peace Society in May 1884, sent a resolution rejoicing "to notice the resolute position taken by Her Majesty's Government in refusing to send British troops to be decimated by drought and disease in the deserts of Africa..." and enclosing leaflets urging "Taxpayers, protest against English blood and treasure being needlessly sacrificed." (3)

In 1885 the Council of the Peace Society, presided over by Edward Sturge, declared "it would be monstrous to wage further war as a war of revenge, against a people who have been guilty of no other offence but that of defending their country against unprovoked aggression." (4) Like the Nonconformists, they sympathised with the Arabs and were against that policy "which meddles and interferes

(1) This seems to have been a sort of offshoot of the Arbitration Union, - it included O'Neill and the Quaker industrialist Arthur Albright.

(2) Anti-Slavery Society MSS. C63/64, Secretary's correspondence, Midland Anti-war Vigilance Committee to Charles Allen, April 1884

(3) F.O. 78/3713, Egypt, domestic and various, 6th-31st May 1884, Manchester Peace Society to F.O. 10th May 1884.

(4) Daily News, 14th February 1885.

with the affairs of other countries." (1) A Peace Society conference was organised at Darlington and literature circulated. (2) The Workmen's Peace Association held a conference on 24th February 1885, with Burt presiding. A bookbinder and a saddler proposed and seconded the anti-war resolution. There was some Socialist infiltration, since an amendment was put and carried that the war was promoted by the capitalist class to extend exploitation to Africa. (3) The Women's Peace and Arbitration Society held a meeting at Exeter Hall. (4) At the beginning of April the peace societies were planning a series of provincial meetings against the Sudan war, (5) possibly only forstalled by the cessation of hostilities. They also intended to renew their campaign in the Autumn if a further Sudan expedition were sent. (6)

(1) Nonconformist and Independent, 22nd January 1885.

(2) I.A.P.A. Monthly Journal, March 1885.

(3) Daily News, 25th February 1885.

(4) Ibid., 7th March 1885.

(5) Ibid., 30th March 1885.

(6) Ibid., 7th March 1885.

The first of the London meetings against the Sudan War in 1885, on 4th March, was organised by the I.A.P.A. in Westminster Town Hall. Harrison, Blunt, Courtney and Labouchere, who had now joined the anti-Imperialists, were on the platform, and an anti-war resolution was passed, (1) though according to the Times the attendance was "very meagre." (2)

At the end of March a mainly working class meeting was held in Clerkenwell where the speakers were Bradlaugh (the secularist M.P. for Northampton), Cremer of the Workmen's Peace Association, representatives of Finsbury Radical Association and of the People's League (anti-House of Lords) (3)

On 2nd April a large meeting was held in St. James Hall, presided over by Bradlaugh, in which London political clubs, radical associations, trade societies and National Secular Society branches, took part. (4) According to Bradlaugh the cost had been defrayed by a Positivist, Mr. Blake, (5) and Edward Beesly moved the resolution. It was

(1) I.A.P.A. Monthly Journal March 1885.

(2) The Times, 5th March 1885.

(3) Reynolds News, 29th March 1885,
Democrat, 28th March 1885.

(4) Reynolds News, 29th March 1885.

(5) Daily News, 3rd April 1885.

at this meeting that William Morris moved a rider to the resolution filling in the vague references to right and wrong with a suggestion that the war was promoted by "capitalists and stockjobbers" and that such wars would continue to take place until working men took control of their own affairs. (1) This was opposed by Annie Besant and was not put to the vote. (2) According to Blunt the earlier Westminster Town Hall meeting had also been "invaded by some Socialists"; he added "I confess my sympathies are with them, as they speak the truth however brutally, about governments and finance." (3)

There was no specifically Socialist meeting against the war, - the Socialist League had plans to hold a meeting in April and wrote to Radical clubs asking their members to attend, but no replies were received and nothing seems to have come of the suggestion. (4) Protests were mainly made by non-Socialist, Liberal voting workers, helped by

(1) Reynolds News, 5th April 1885.

(2) Daily News, 3rd April 1885.

(3) W.S. Blunt, Gordon at Khartoum, pps. 392-3.

(4) Hammersmith Socialist Society MSS, ADD.MSS. 45,891, Minutes of meeting of 8th April 1885.

Positivists and M.P.S. and with Socialists on the periphery.

There was a sprinkling of meetings in the provinces. In Birmingham Arthur O'Neill again convened a meeting. (1) Birmingham Positivists met on 15th February, but the Liberals appear to have been divided. Birmingham Liberal Association was criticised for not putting pressure on the Government, and at a small peace meeting on 27th February, a Liberal was inclined to sympathise with the Government "who to a large extent had been forced into the position they were now in." (2)

A Liverpool meeting against the war, organised by local ministers and Liberals, was addressed by Henry Richard. (3) In Leicester a meeting at the end of March was partly promoted by J. Page Hopps a Unitarian minister and Liberal. (4) Manchester Peace Society members arranged a meeting at Eccles on 13th April. (5)

A small meeting of about twenty people was held in Edinburgh, and a petition against the war was started, which

(1) Birmingham Daily Post, 14th February 1885.

(2) Ibid., 28th February 1885.

(3) The Times, 16th February 1885.

(4) Birmingham Daily Post, 30th March 1885.

(5) F.O. 78/3840, Egypt, domestic and various, April 1885, resolution sent to the F.O. 16th April 1885.

had however, only obtained one hundred signatures. The promoters were Liberals who were confused by the usual differences of opinion, some of them feeling that the petition "implied a censure on the Government." (1)

The Aborigines Protection Society, unlike the Anti-Slavery Society joined in condemnation of the war, opposing the slaughter of the Arabs. (2) Their principles which led them to support direct Imperial control in South Africa, also made them oppose what they could categorise as anti-humanitarian Imperialism.

A last element in the anti-war campaign were the Irish Nationalists. Home Rule M.Ps. formed a substantial section of the Parliamentary anti-war group. There were two themes in their opinions, - first, delight that England was being placed in an awkward position abroad, and secondly a feeling of solidarity with the Sudanese in their struggle for freedom. In 1884, United Ireland eulogised the Mahdi, "All hail to this excellent Moslem. The more we hear of him, the better we like him." (3)

(1) Scotsman, 4th March 1885.

(2) Transactions of the A.P.S. Annual Report for 1885.

(3) Quoted in Manchester Guardian, 8th February 1884.

On 8th February 1885, T.P. O'Connor, addressing a Nationalist rally in County Dublin, said Gordon had no more right to be in the Sudan than Lord Spencer in Dublin Castle. ⁽¹⁾

Like Ireland, the Sudan was an instance of Imperialist aggression and oppression. O'Connor on the slaughter of the Arabs said, "But that was the policy of British ministers, especially British Whig ministers, in all parts of the world and in Ireland too." ⁽²⁾

Speeches tended to be punctuated with cheers for the Mahdi, - William O'Brien M.P. in County Tipperary, said, "There was not a capital of Europe in which the fall of Khartoum was not received with joy and exultation (loud and prolonged cheers). (A voice, -"cheers for the Mahdi" - cheers), and with a secret wish and prayer for more power to the Mahdi and his men (Cheers, a voice "More power to the Mahdi")" ⁽³⁾

At a big demonstration in Phoenix Park, Dublin, a speaker said "He hoped Ireland would ever be on the side of the people struggling for their freedom, and it must be a great consolation to the Irish to know that on the present occasion

(1) Birmingham Daily Post, 9th February 1885.

(2) United Ireland, 14th February 1885.

(3) Ibid.

they were not helping to oppress those Soudan people." (1)

There was a feeling by the end of March that a good deal of opinion was mobilising against the Sudan campaign. On 20th March, Reginald Brett wrote to Wolseley, "...the general sentiment here is critically hostile to the further advance of our force." (2) By 17th April the opposition had increased, - "The feeling in this country ...is so strongly opposed to this Soudan War, that the Government would not have been able to carry it through.." (3)

Ministers had received resolutions against the war, and M.Ps. reported strong objections from their constituencies. (4)

The anti-war groupings included most Liberals and Radicals who approved of social reforms at home. There were three pivots of the anti-Imperialist stand in relation to Egypt and the Sudan, - it was immoral, it was un-Liberal and it distracted attention from social reform at home. The Salford Weekly News claimed to express the view of the "Provincial Radical", - "Why should we be spending all this money and sacrificing all these lives for the sake of

(1) Ibid, 7th March 1885.

(2) Reginald Brett, On cit, pps. 109-110.

(3) Ibid p. 113.

(4) Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS.44,547, letter book 1883-5, Gladstone to Dilke 16th February 1885.

Egypt and the Egyptian bondholders ?" (1) The Edinburgh anti-war group pointed out that the Government was planning a Sudan railway but could not lay railways or telegraph lines to the Highlands. (2)

There was a feeling that aggression abroad could not be reconciled with Liberal reforms at home, Wilfred Lawson said at a Cockermouth meeting in 1884, "it was not true Liberalism to shout for the enfranchisement of two million people at home, and send their armies to slay millions of people abroad." (3) A true Liberal attitude would be "to put an end to the policy of warlike meddling and bring back a stable reign of peacefully minding our own affairs." (4) The aims of the Liberal anti-war section were summed up by J allanson Picton M.P. "...what I want is a break with the false and ruinous maxims of the vain Imperialism that was the boast of the former Government and has been the weakness of the present." (5)

(1) Salford Weekly News, 14th February 1885.

(2) Scotaman, 4th March 1885.

(3) The Times, 15th April 1884.

(4) I.A.P.A. Monthly Journal, March 1885.

(5) Ibid, May 1885.

The Imperialist Case.

It was the task of the expansionist party to counter these arguments and provide a broad *raison d'être* for an Imperial policy. One useful platform was the philanthropic sentiment promoted by the Anti-Slavery Society.

The Society in this period provided an interesting example of an almost unconscious swing from Liberal/pacifism to support of Imperialism. It ultimately came to the conclusion that the only effective anti-slavery policy in Africa would be one backed by Imperial might. The Society in 1882 was small, largely confined to London and chronically short of money. Most of its financial help came from Quakers, to whom constant appeals were made for funds. Annual subscription amounted to only £200, but monthly expenses were £100, - a good deal of money was spent on publishing a monthly magazine, the Anti-Slavery Reporter; ⁽¹⁾ the deficit was made up with special donations from individuals and Society of Friends meetings. ⁽²⁾ Many members of the committee were Quakers of the Sturge and Pease families and most were

(1) A.S.S.MSS. E3/4 Letter Book 1874-1886, Allen to E.S. Sewell, 28th May 1884.

(2) Anti-Slavery Reporter, February, November 1884, January 1885.

Liberals, though Rev. Horace Waller ⁽¹⁾ was described as "a staunch Conservative" ⁽²⁾ The Quaker complexion of the Society was reflected in its statement of aims, - it repudiated military force in favour of diplomatic and peaceful methods, - "To vigilantly watch for every opportunity of promoting the exercise of the diplomatic and consular influence of England..." ⁽³⁾ But the secretary, Charles Allen was not averse to a more forceful attitude, - he felt somewhat restricted by the pacifists on the committee, writing to Chesson of the A.P.S. in 1883, about Egypt and the Sudan, he remarked "We have many "Friends" in our body. I'm afraid I shock them sometimes !" ⁽⁴⁾ Allen started as a Liberal but as a result of the Government's refusal to undertake expansion in the Sudan in 1884-5, he felt his loyalty being eroded; on the vote of censure in February 1884, he wrote "...though I am a staunch Liberal I quite hope the Government will be turned out...it is high time that someone who knows that power entails responsibility

(1) Horace Waller, 1833-96, was a Church of England clergyman who went to Africa in connection with the High Church Universities Mission in 1861. He was a friend of Livingstone and on his return to England in 1874, became rector of Twywell, Northants.

(2) E3/4, Allen to R.N. Fowler, 29th November 1883.

(3) E2/10, Minute book 1876-86, 10th March 1882.

(4) C124/15, secretary's correspondence, Allen to Chesson 19th December 1883.

should take the helm." (1) By 1900 he had become a Unionist and was writing letters of support to Chamberlain.

The A.S.S. was concerned with both domestic slavery, - as in Egypt, - and the slave trade in Central/East Africa. The Society believed that the African slave trade was increasing; more frequent reports from missionaries and explorers were reaching England, and the Arabs had begun to penetrate the interior of Africa, from the coast. Interest in the Sudan had been generated by the anti-slave trade work of Samuel Baker and Gordon who had acted in the 1870's as Governor Generals in the service of the Egyptian authorities. Both Allen and Waller were friends of Gordon, and urged some continuation of his work in the Sudan. As early as 1881, the A.S.S. was requesting the British Government to send two commissioners to the Sudan, presumably to exercise diplomatic pressure. (2) The A.S.S. mission was to stir up anti-slavery feeling and counteract the general belief that the slave trade problem had been solved by the naval blockades.

(1) E3/4, Allen to Baker 8th February 1884.

(2) Ibid, Allen to John Scott 11th May 1882.

In 1882, Allen's reaction to the Arabist revolt was that it was essentially a slave owners' rebellion. He wrote to Baker, "In my opinion the pretended abolition of the slave trade by the so-called national party is a "ruse de guerre". It is a bait thrown out to enlist the sympathies of England upon their side...such a body as the National Party had no real existence." (1) This was also the opinion of an Edinburgh member of the A.S.S., Robert Felkin⁽²⁾ who thought "Slavery is one of the vital points for which Arabi is really working, though not professedly." (3) Allen had considerable correspondence on this matter with Blunt, who insisted that Arabi genuinely intended to abolish slavery. Blunt had a poor opinion of the philanthropists, commenting caustically, "Our professional humanitarians were no more anxious to abolish slavery altogether, than Masters of Foxhounds are anxious to abolish foxes." (4) There was a grain of truth

(1) A.S.S. MSS. G29, Sudan, Allen to Baker 28th March 1882.

(2) Felkin had gone as a medical missionary with the C.M.S. mission to Uganda, and travelled home via Egypt and the Sudan.

(3) C57/19, Felkin to Allen 11th June 1882.

(4) W.S. Blunt, Gordon nt Khartoum,

in this, since the A.S.S. did thrive on a steady diet of slave trade revelations. Allen began to wonder if Egyptian slavery would end "...without some foreign intervention." (1) He had little sympathy with the Arabs or Egyptians, tending to agree with another assessment of "The soul killing, emasculating and polygamous institutions of Mohammedanism..." which "must in the nature of things pass away before the advance of Western civilization." (2) Allen looked on the occupation of Egypt as a heaven sent opportunity to abolish slavery; he wrote to Gordon "The war in Egypt seems to have been a marvel of success and we ought to make good use of our strong position..." (3) On the other hand the anti-force policy of the A.S.S. made him cautious in expressing an opinion on the rights or wrongs of the occupation, - he wrote to a correspondent, "The subject of keeping our troops in Egypt, scarcely comes within our province ... by our charter we are bound not to

(1) E3/4, Allen to Blunt, 21st March 1882.

(2) Fortnightly Review, October 1884, Captain E.A. De Cosson, "The future of the Soudan."

(3) E3/4, Allen to Gordon, 4th October 1882.

seek to employ force." (1)

In November 1882 an anti-slavery meeting was held which urged the abolition of the legal status of slavery in Egypt. (2) An additional argument was that "the commercial interests of England and of Europe have long suffered from the obstruction to legitimate commerce caused by the slave trade." (3) Basic to anti-slavery policy was the belief that legitimate commerce was the best way to counteract the trade in human beings. The A.S.S. therefore could not avoid being concerned with commercial schemes. It was anxious in 1882, for example that the Government should renew the subsidy to the East African service of the British Imperial Steam Navigation Company run by William Mackinnon. (4) This presaged the future closer connection between the A.S.S. and Mackinnon's African schemes.

The A.S.S. was also interested in 1882 in a plan to construct a Sudan railway from Suakin on the Red Sea coast to Berber on the Nile. The originator of the plan

(1) Ibid, Allen to a correspondent, 21st November 1883.

(2) E2/10, Minutes of meeting held 1st December 1882.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid.

was A.B. Wylde, (the son of W.B. Wylde a Foreign Office official and A.S.S. member) who was in business on the Red Sea and believed that there was a great future in African trade. (1) The idea was to form a syndicate of capitalists who would obtain a concession from the Egyptian Government who would also guarantee four percent interests on the capital. Not surprisingly the Egyptian Government refused. (2)

The A.S.S. looked on the Mahdist revolt in the Sudan as a slave traders's revolt, and the Society was very hopeful of the outcome of the Gordon mission. (3) Some embarrassment was caused by Gordon's proclamation granting immunity to the slave traders, and his request that a notorious slave dealer, Zebehr Pasha, should join him in Khartoum. The Committee made a positive protest against the appointment of Zebehr in February 1884. (4) This was the only official position taken in 1884; the Committee felt unable to express an opinion on "the policy of a permanent maintenance of British authority at Khartoum." (5)

(1) Anti-Slavery Reporter, April 1885.

(2) Ibid, February 1885.

(3) Ibid, July 1884.

(4) Ibid, March 1884.

Birmingham Ladies Negroes Friends Society, Report for 1884.

(5) Anti-Slavery Reporter, March 1884.

There were considerable differences of opinion in the Society. At the beginning of March a memorial was presented to the Committee which stated, "the A.S.S. are anxious to impress upon Her Majesty's Government the extreme importance of retaining for the present the control of the territory which lies between the Red Sea littoral and the Valley of the Nile..." But there was so much disagreement that it had to be dropped. (1) It was also decided not to hold any public meetings on the Sudan slave trade. (2)

Allen would personally have liked to have come out in favour of retention of the Sudan, - he wrote of the Government "Was there ever so cowardly a policy?...we are fearfully anxious about Gordon." (3) But he had to consider the opinion of anti-interventionist supporters such as F.W. Newman, the editor of the Friend, who objected to the occupation of Egypt and the Sudan. (4) Allen in a letter to Newman, summed up the difficulties of the anti-slavery position, - "There are differences of opinion amongst the

(1) E2/10, Minutes of meeting held on 7th March 1884.

(2) Ibid, Minutes of meeting held 4th April 1884.

(3) E3/4, Allen to Baker 8th February 1884.

(4) Ibid, Allen to Newman,

the committee, especially about Egypt, and I try to be fair in my monthly periodical. I give no opinion about our originally going to Egypt, but I think that being there, we ought not to have tried to act as though we were not there, and ignored all responsibilities...I look on the Mahdi's war as a slave trade war....Still we never advocate putting down the slave trade by force. Hoping you will not class us with those who cry out for war." (1)

The A.S.S. came out much more openly in favour of the occupation of the Sudan in 1885. They naturally shared in the general horror at the fall of Khartoum. Horace Waller preaching a sermon on Gordon on 22nd February, wondered, - "What will England do ? Rise to be the helper of Gordon's, of God's, "poor people", or, when the nine days wonder is over, sink back and say within herself, "these things are no concern of ours"? But God forbid that even the semblance of an approach to politics should be made by me in this your parish pulpit." (2) But it was impossible for the A.S.S. not to become involved in politics on this occasion. Allen held the general Conservative view that

(1) Ibid.

(2) Anti-Slavery Reporter, April 1885.

the Government were to blame for Gordon's death by their delay in sending the rescue expedition. (1)

He could also not help hoping that the A.S.S. might benefit from the Gordon enthusiasm and popular interest in the Sudan, (2) and the A.S.S. asked for a donation from the Gordon Memorial Fund. (3)

The A.S.S. campaign was directed towards support for the Suakin-Berber railway, the same line proposed by Wylde in 1882, and which the Government now intended to build. A resolution in favour of the railway was sent to Granville; (4) even when the Government abandoned the scheme, the A.S.S. urged that the plant should remain at Suakin. (5) Their attitude implied support for the retention of at least the eastern part of the Sudan.

Allen was in trouble with the peace party again, - he wrote to a friend in India, "I have been obliged to be careful in writing of the Soudan, lest I should offend the

(1) E3/4, Allen to Consul O'Neill, 26th February 1885.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., Allen to Baroness Burdett-Coutts, 25th February 1885.

(4) E2/10, Minutes of meeting held on 6th March 1885.

(5) Ibid., Minutes of meeting held 1st May 1885.

prejudices of some of our friends who think more of avoiding all conflict than they do of the future welfare of the tribes." (1) Justifying his position to Newman, Allen admitted that an anti-slavery policy was often served by expansion in Africa and that force would sometimes have to be used, - "I shall as far as possible avoid all the political aspects of the Egyptian question, excepting in so far as they relate to slavery and the slave trade... Certainly this society has not advocated the employment of outside force, but Egypt must compel her own people to observe the slave trade treaties and for this end she will have sometimes to employ la force majeure." (2) He also admitted in a letter to another critic, that the A.S.S. was in danger of clashing with the Peace Society to which some of its members belonged. (3) Besides Quakers, the supporters of the A.S.S. also included Imperialists such as W.E. Forster, "the jingo in a drab coat" as Morley called him, R.N. Fowler Conservative M.P. for the City of

(1) E3/4, Allen to Judge Scott 12th April 1885.

(2) Ibid, Allen to Newman, 20th July 1885.

(3) Ibid, Ellen to Reckitt, 5th November 1885.

London, H.M. Stanley the explorer and Baroness Burdett-Coutts. (1)

The anti-slavery issue was gradually turning professional humanitarians into Imperialists.

By 1885 a good deal of publicity had been given to the Sudan slave trade. Felkin in a speech to the Scottish Geographical Society, gave an emotive description, - "If you had marched with me along a thousand miles of desert slave route, and seen for yourselves the way lined with the grinning skeletons of fallen or murdered slaves, you would understand why I feel so deeply on the subject." (2) He concluded that if the Sudan were evacuated, "...the old slave trade must inevitably revive," (3) To leave the Sudan was represented as the equivalent of abandonning many millions of slaves to their fate. The S.D.F. might regard the slavery issue as a gigantic red herring designed "to draw off the attention of workers of England from their own condition." (4) But many

(1) Baroness Burdett-Coutts b. 1814, was interested in a variety of philanthropic schemes; she was a friend of Rajah Brooke of the North Borneo Co. the first Company to receive a charter from the Government. In 1881, she married her American secretary William Bartlett, 40 years her junior, who took her name and became a Conservative M.P. See Clara Burdett Batterson, Angela Burdett-Coutts and the Victorians, London 1953.

(2) Scottish Geographical Magazine, June 1885, R.W. Felkin, "The Egyptian Sudan."

(3) Ibid.

(4) Justice, 22nd March 1884.

philanthropists thought, "that on the Egyptian Government's retiring from the Soudan, the slave owning system will be firmly re-established." (1) A good deal of interest had arisen as a result of Gordon's work and even Nonconformists were not immune to anti-slavery sentiment, as a few letters to the periodicals show. (2)

The argument that legitimate commerce would help to eradicate the slave trade, rested on the assumption that the Sudan contained a good deal of potential wealth and would provide a market for British goods. There was a good deal of optimism about the commercial prospects of the Sudan, promoted by people in favour of its retention. The Patriotic Association claimed, "The commerce with the Sudan and Central Africa is considerable and increasing." (3) A Times editorial robustly declared "With Egypt under good and stable government, nothing is wanted save two or three hundred miles of rail to open up an immense area of fertile wheat growing country to commerce." (4)

(1) R.G. Webster, Force no Remedy, an address at the London and Westminster Workington's Association, 1884.

(2) Nonconformist and Independent, 26th February 1885.

(3) The Times, 21st January 1884.

(4) Ibid., 8th January 1885.

The explorer, Vernon, Lovett Cameron prophesied, - "the security of Khartoum and the White Nile mean a development of trade in Africa, compared with which the expected trade on the Congo, will for many years, be insignificant." (1)

Felkin listed the possible items of Sudan trade, - cotton, gum, ostrich feathers, "nor is there any reason why Suakin should not become a great grain-exporting port and the English market be supplied by farmers around Khartoum." (2)

The Rev. C.T. Wilson of the C.M.S. expounded the usual arguments for African trade, "The question of opening up commerce with the tribes inhabiting Central Africa is becoming every year of greater importance to Great Britain, as in many markets where our merchants had formerly a monopoly, formidable rivals have entered into competition with us, and as some countries which used to be large consumers of our manufactures are now manufacturing for themselves, it is manifest that new markets and fresh fields for commerce must be sought..." (3)

A good many people were impressed at this time by

(1) Contemporary Review, April 1885, pps. 573-578, V.L. Cameron, "Our duty in the Soudan." p.577.

(2) Scottish Geographical Magazine, June 1885, opcit.

(3) Rev. C.T. Wilson & R.W. Felkin, Uganda and the Egyptian Soudan, 2 vols, London 1882, Vol 1, p.337.

evidence of economic insecurity in the trade depressions and growing foreign competition intensified by protection, but few businessmen seemed to be impressed by the Sudan's potential as a market. There were a few embryo schemes for trading companies. Blunt was approached by a would be promoter in 1885. (1) A Joseph Hanson of Tipton Staffs, wrote to the Foreign Office early in 1885, wanting to form a Nile navigation, irrigation and Central African Trading Company, and was duly discouraged. (2) Another individual was eager to obtain a guano concession on the islands off the Red Sea coast. (3) V.L. Cameron suggested a Company appointed by the Sultan with the help of the British Government which would trade in ivory, hides, gun, horns and feathers. (4)

The most determined promoters were Francis William Fox, (5) and Henry Russell, who pressed the Government

(1) W.S. Blunt, Gordon at Khartoum, p.437.

(2) F.O. 78/3838, Egypt, Domestic & Various, February 1885, Joseph Hanson to F.O. 29th January, and reply.

(3) Ibid, Daniel du Pass to F.O. 20th February 1885.

(4) Fortnightly Review, August 1885, V.L. Cameron "The future of the Soudan."

(5) Francis William Fox was a Quaker and member of the Friends Anti-Slavery Committee.

for some years for permission to start a Company to engage in peaceful commerce in the East Sudan. ⁽¹⁾ This was essentially a humanitarian plan, designed as much for the welfare of the tribes as for profit. There was also after the fall of Khartoum a growing interest by a group of people, previously interested in the Congo trade, (see below).

But the Chambers of Commerce, though concerned over the West African and Congo trade in 1884, were not much interested in the Sudan. They had not even showed much concern over Egypt in 1882, although events in Egypt had greater economic implications because of the trade route through the Canal and the cotton trade. But only a few references to Egypt were made by Chambers in 1882, though trade with Spain on the other hand was being very extensively discussed at this time. At Glasgow in August some firms connected with steam navigation to the East, expressed concern over the Suez Canal. ⁽²⁾ The matter was raised at the Newcastle and Gateshead Chamber by C.M. Palmer, a Liberal MP. and president of the Chamber, who

(1) Henry Russell, The ruin of the Soudan, cause, effect & remedy, a resume of events 1883-91, London 1892.

(2) Chamber of Commerce Journal, 1st September 1882.

commented, "considering our great shipping and trading interests in that country, we ought to see that the government of Egypt was settled on a sound and proper basis, and be able to master it by our presence or by the influence we could exercise on the spot." (1) The only specific economic interest was the cotton trade, - the increase in the price of raw cotton due to the Egyptian disturbances, was said to be affecting Lancashire towns such as Bolton. (2) Almost all of Egypt's cotton seed crop was exported to England. (3) Manchester merchants and manufacturers were reported to have shown their interest in Egypt by holding a banquet to celebrate the bombardment of Alexandria, - "The following night when they heard ...that most of their own property was destroyed they again indulged in a champagne supper to keep their spirits up." (4)

Apart from individuals and firms owning property in Egypt, few commercial interests were much worried by events

(1) Ibid, 10th October 1882.

(2) Ibid, 1st September 1882.

(3) Birmingham Daily Post, 14th July 1882.

(4) Echo, 25th July 1882.

in Egypt. A few businessmen wrote the Foreign Office anxious letters about their Egyptian property, ⁽¹⁾ and some, like John Matthewson of the Midland Engineering Company, held the Government responsible for damage to their goods and asked for compensation. ⁽²⁾ The attitude of refugees who had seen their property destroyed by the riots, was especially hostile towards the Arabists, "If they let the Arabs off, especially Arabi Pasha,....without hanging a lot of them, it will be one of the greatest mistakes they can make..." ⁽³⁾

The holders of Egyptian bonds of course favoured intervention, and thought that the Government was obligated to see that they did not lose financially. They claimed that their bonds had been purchased on the assumption that the Anglo-French control would be effective, - "I bought my bonds solely upon the faith of Her Majesty's Government having taken financial matters in Egypt under their superintendence, and I feel that I (in common with many others) have a strong claim upon our Government to see that

(1) See letters in F.O. 78/3470/3472/3474, Egypt domestic and various, op cit.

(2) F.O. 78/3470, op cit, John Matthewson to F.O. 22nd June 1882.

(3) Ibid, Refugee to F.O. 27th June 1882.

the control is maintained," declared one indignant bondholder, (1)

The Radical press noticed the presence in the interventionist party of stockbrokers, bondholders, officials in Egypt and anyone mixed up in Egyptian commercial and banking transactions, (2) It was argued that Imperialist meetings were composed of the same type of person, "Hebrew userers, grasping money-grabbers and the whole horde of vultures that have for years been engaged in despoiling the Egyptians..." (3)

But the Imperialist campaign was more noticable for its general Conservative bias than for commercial predominance. It tended to be developed by fringe Conservative groups such as the Patriotic Association and the Primrose League, which made Disraelian Imperialism a central part of their creed. During the Egyptian/Sudan crises, an Imperialist point of view was worked out.

(1) F.O. 78/3469, Egypt, domestic and various, January -May 1882, bondholder to F.O. 11th February 1882.

(2) Echo, 24th July 1884.

(3) Reynolds News, 24th February 1884.

The Patriotic Association had been in existence since 1877, "to uphold the honour and the interests of the British Empire." (1) Its supporters included a number of Conservative M.Ps. - Ashmead Bartlett, (2) Baron de Worms, (3) R.N. Fowler, and Henry Chaplin. (4) There was also Algeron Borthwick, the owner of the Morning Post, (5) Richard Temple a former Anglo-Indian administrator, (6) a sprinkling of aristocrats such as Lord Dunraven and the Marquis of Waterford, and some City magnates.

The Conservatives held two public meetings in London 1882, one in June at Willis' Rooms presided over by Bouverie the chairman of the foreign bondholders at which Richard Temple spoke. (7) And one in July organised

(1) Debater, 16th February 1884.

(2) Ellis Ashmead Bartlett, 1849-1902, was the brother in law of Baroness Burdett-Coutts, M.P. for Eye in Suffolk, and after 1885 for the Eccleshall Division of Sheffield. He was chairman of the National Union of Conservative Association 1886-8, and editor of the Conservative penny weekly, England.

(3) Henry Baron de Worms, 1840-1903, Conservative M.P. for Greenwich, was a banker and related to the Rothschilds.

(4) Henry Chaplin M.P. was a noted apologist for the agricultural interest, protectionist tendencies might have led him to an Imperialist position.

(5) Algeron Borthwick, 1st Baron Glenesk, was M.P. for S. Kensington from 1885, and a "fair trade" supporter.

(6) Sir Richard Temple 1826-1902, M.P. for Evesham 1885-92.

(7) Echo, 29th June 1882.

by the Patriotic Association. (1)

Conservatives advocated direct British control in Egypt - unlike the Liberal supporters of intervention they saw no possibility of self government. Edward Dicey put the typical Conservative Imperialist attitude in an article in Nineteenth Century, recommending a protectorate, declaring that no basis existed for constitutional government and patronising the fellaheen, "A more hard-working, docile and easily governed race does not exist on the face of the globe." (2) Other Conservative pamphlets by J.C. McCoan M.P. and W.T. Marriott M.P. put the same point of view. (3)

The Conservative attack on the Government really got under way in February 1884, when Mahdist victories led to fears for Gordon's safety. A good deal of Conservative opinion was not averse to the idea of a Sudan Protectorate. There were a number of elements in the arguments used, - it could be urged that just as the occupation of Egypt was

(1) Ibid, 10th July 1882.

(2) Nineteenth Century, August 1882, pps.161-174, Edward Dicey, "England's intervention in Egypt."

(3) See J.C. McCoan, The Egyptian Problem, London 1884.
W.T. Marriott, Two years of British intervention in Egypt, London 1884.

necessary to protect the India route, so occupation of the Sudan was necessary to protect the Egyptian frontiers. There was also anti-slave trade feeling which appeared in some Conservative resolutions. (1) But there were also a number of psychological arguments which appeared as an intrinsic part of Imperialism.

There was a strong feeling that apart from any other considerations, British honour and prestige demanded that Gordon be rescued and the Mahdists routed. As the Times put it, - "The vitality of our Empire consists in the conviction held by friends and foes alike, that in the last resort the words of England and of Englishmen will be backed by deeds." (2) An intolerable loss of face would follow any failure to rescue Gordon. A typical Conservative resolution from Preston Conservative Club claimed that the Government's policy resulted in "lowering of the national honour and the deliberate sacrifice of the interests and of the prestige of England in every quarter of the globe." (3)

(1) For example in the comments of Conservative members of the Birmingham Sunday Evening Debating Society, see minutes of meeting of 9th March 1884.

(2) Quoted from Times 31st March 1884, in History of the Times, London 1947, vol 3.

(3) Manchester Guardian, 18th February 1884.

The defeat of Majuba Hill had great emotive value for Conservatives who felt that Britain had been pushed into a defensive position in world affairs. At a conference of Parliamentary Debating Societies in June 1884, a Hastings delegate declared in exasperation, "I need only mention the incident, so dishonourable to the British flag, of Majuba Hill. We all know rebels are allowed to teach the British nation what is right and proper. We see them snatch from our hands all the power we have gained in centuries in that part of the world...When I was a boy it was said that for every one of an Englishman's hairs that was hurt, a thousand of the enemy should be taken." (1)

Irritation at the timidity of the Government led to an aggressive stand, denounced by the Liberals as jingoism, and perfectly summed up in a Primrose Record version of the sentiments of a Conservative working man, - "My vote goes to those who won't let a growl or a scratch frighten them into knuckling under to foreign nations, but will stand to their guns, maintain the rights of Englishmen all over the world and the honour of the British flag." (2)

(1) Debater,

(2) Primrose Record, 1st October 1885.

Conservatives felt that Gladstone's policy was dangerous to the safety of the whole Empire. ⁽¹⁾ By 1885, Joseph Cowen was distinguishing two attitudes, insular and imperial, "the advocates of the first would endanger great objects to save expense and avoid obligations. The advocates of the second contend that the Empire could only be held together by a display of the spirit that won it, and that to imperil it would be to cripple commerce and jeopardise civilization." ⁽²⁾ Conservatives felt that the Imperialist position involved seizing as much territory as possible in the African scramble, and regarded the Sudan as particularly important as the gateway to Central Africa. ⁽³⁾ The Liberals were unbearably parochial and insensitive to the great events which were happening abroad; they were represented by "Mr. Gladstone and his Cabinet of vestrymen, with their plans, their franchise bill, their littleness, love of party and indifference to the honour or greatness of England..." ⁽⁴⁾

The glorious alternative to this was "power

(1) W.T. Marriott, Op cit, p.3.

(2) Scotsman, 16th February 1885.

(3) See Contemporary Review, April 1885, Sir John Lubbock, "England and the Soudan", pp.562-572.

(4) Letters of Lord and Lady Wolseley, op cit, p.131. The same attitude was expressed in the Debater, 25th October 1883.

and strength", grand Imperial enterprises and the magnificence of ruling an Empire of eight million square miles and three hundred million inhabitants. (1)

The Primrose League combined Imperialism with support for the established Church and the Constitution. 1884, the date of its formation was felt to be a critical one of the Empire, - the Transvaal had been lost, the Sudan garrisons abandoned and "that true knight, General Gordon was to be left to his fate at Khartoum." (2) A leaflet, "Why should I join the Primrose League?" answered "Because I wish to see the British flag respected by all foreign nations and never insulted or disgraced. Because I wish to see the Army and the Navy maintained in a state that will make foreign nations think twice before meddling with British possessions." (3) A jingoistic hostility to other nations, which had been particularly noticable in the 1870's in support of Disraeli's foreign policy, was becoming an important ingredient in the Imperialism of the 1880's

(1) Debater, 24th May 1884.

(2) The Primrose League, its rise, progress and constitution, London 1887, p.7.

(3) Primrose Record, 23rd July 1885.

It was intensified by the "humiliations" which the Liberal Government was held to have imposed on Britain.

The League overlapped with the Patriotic Association in membership and included a good many Conservative M.Ps. In 1884, it was attempting to secure signatures to petitions asking for the rescue of Gordon. ⁽¹⁾ The attention of all Imperialists was occupied in trying to pressurise the Government into sending a Gordon relief expedition to the Sudan. In February 1884, the Patriotic Association organised a London meeting at the Guildhall, after a requisition containing ten thousand names had been presented to R.N. Fowler, the Lord Mayor, by a deputation led by Ashmead Bartlett. ⁽²⁾ There was a further meeting in St. James Hall on 1st March at which three thousand people were reported to be present, ⁽³⁾ and a third on 8th May, where the speakers were almost all Conservative M.Ps. and even the Times conceded that it was probably not without a "party purpose". ⁽⁴⁾

(1) Janet H. Robb, Op cit.

(2) England, 16th February 1884.

(3) Ibid, 8th March 1884.
The Times, 3rd March 1884.

(4) The Times, 9th May 1884.

In Manchester there were two Conservative meetings in February and May 1884. Large numbers of people were reported to have been present at each meeting. The first was invaded by a few Radicals who tried to put an amendment but failed. (1) At the second meeting the resolutions were moved by A. Balfour M.P. and E. Gibson M.P. and the Times admitted that "the proceedings were under avowedly Conservative auspices." (2)

A number of Conservative Clubs and associations including Workingmen's Clubs passed resolutions denouncing the apathy of the Government in delaying to rescue Gordon. Lord Salisbury in mid-February, was replying to several of these. (3) Most of the resolutions against the Government which arrived at the Foreign Office were sent from Conservative organisations. (4) A typical resolution from Blackpool Conservative Association attributed to the Government's policy "the massacre of thousands of people almost in sight of

(1) Manchester Guardian, 19th February 1884.

(2) The Times, 12th May 1884.

(3) Salisbury MSS. Christ Church Library, Oxford, C/6, Letter Book 1881-7, entry 110, replies by Salisbury to resolutions 14th-16th February 1884.

(4) See F.O. 78/3709/3713, Egypt domestic and various, resolutions from Woolwich and Greenwich sent 21st February and 17th May 1884.

British troops" in the Red Sea ports, (1) Inverness Burgh Conservative Association arranged an anti-government meeting in June, at which great anxiety was expressed on Gordon's behalf. (2) Meetings were held at Exeter, where it was decided to petition the Queen for the relief of Gordon, (3) and Salisbury, organised by the citizens of the town. (4) Agitation reached a peak in May when Gladstone was hissed at the opening of the Health Exhibition in London. (5)

One aspect of the Gordon agitation was the development of a number of schemes for private rescue expeditions. Gordon himself had suggested that money might be raised to send an expedition from Turkey. Some of the plans expressed a light-hearted spirit of adventure, like the one divulged to Blunt by Mark Napier on 18th April, - "They had an idea which was to get together one thousand sportsmen,

(1) F.O. 78/3710, Blackpool Conservative Association to F.L. 8th March 1884.

(2) F.O. 78/3714, Inverness Burgh Conservative Association to F.O. 11th June 1884.

(3) The Times, 20th May 1884.

(4) F.O. 78/3709, Resolution sent to F.O. 16th February 1884.

(5) The Times, 9th May 1884.

men they explained who would be ready "to go 1,000 miles to shoot a lion," and try to force a passage from Suakin to Berber, and carry off Gordon on the true principles of a rescue. They thought I might like to join them and show them the way." (1) A fund was started by a Mrs. Surtees-Alnott which it was intended to use to bribe the Arabs to provide the Khartoum garrison with a safe conduct. (2) The Foreign Office received suggestions and requests for information on a Gordon relief caravan, but the Government refused support for all these schemes. (3) A fairly serious plan to raise money for a volunteer force, in operation by the end of April. A Mr. Dawney (later a member of the Emin Pasha expedition) wrote to the Times on 29th April urging a public subscription. (4) Mrs. Surtees-Alnott waived her

- (1) W.S. Blunt, Gordon at Khartoum, p.221.
Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS.44,110, Blunt to Gladstone 23rd April 1884.
- (2) W.S. Blunt, Gordon at Khartoum, p.534.
- (3) F.O. 78/3712, letters to F.O. of 21st April, 26th April, 4th May 1884.
Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS. 44,547, Gladstone to Dilke 30th May 1884.
- (4) F.O. 78/3712, Extract from the Times, 29th April 1884.

own scheme in favour of this and contributed £100. (1)
 The Times was then deluged with cheques and offers of
 subscriptions. The Comtesse de Noailles (a supporter of
 the A.S.S.) offered £5,000. (2) On 10th May the
 Baroness Burdett-Coutts, who was in the forefront of
 the activity, wrote to the Times describing the wide
 volume of support for the expedition, though it seemed
 that no definite organisation had been formed, - the
 Mayor had been asked to convene a meeting but had
 refused. (3) The plans eventually petered out
 possibly due to lack of official encouragement and
 the multitude of practical difficulties.

(1) W.S. Blunt, Gordon at Khartoum, p.534.

(2) Times 2nd May 1884.

A.S.S. MSS. E3/4, Allen to Colonel Grant 10th June 1884.

(3) The Times, 10th May 1884.

The Gordon Cult.

Gordon enthusiasm revived dramatically with the news of the fall of Khartoum which arrived on the evening of February 5th. The Pall Mall Gazette remarked "The excitement indeed seems to have surpassed that created by any event for many years past." (1) In London "the inquirers at the War Office were incessant, the clubs were crowded with members and the newspapers could not be printed fast enough to satisfy the cravings of the public for information..." (2) In Edinburgh "a general feeling of gloom and depression took possession of most minds...little else was spoken of throughout the day..." (3) "A profound sensation was created at Cardiff and the business of the Glamorganshire Assizes was momentarily interrupted while Mr. Justice Stephens and the jurors perused a telegram announcing the unwelcome intelligence." (4)

The press behaved as though some unparalleled disaster had taken place. Even the Liberal papers joined in the general dismay. The Bradford Observer said "The fall of Khartoum is the greatest misfortune which has befallen this country for many years the

(1) 6th February 1885.

(2) Bradford Observer, 6th February 1885.

(3) Scotsman, 6th February 1885.

(4) Bradford Observer, 6th February 1885.

greatest since the Indian Mutiny." (1) And the Daily News, "Seldom within the memory of living man has the news of such national disaster reached England as that which was made known to the public yesterday." (2) Comparisons with that other Imperial catastrophe, the Indian Mutiny, were frequent. The initial response from Liberal as well as Conservative papers, was a lofty determination to continue with the Sudan campaign until the Mahdi had been defeated. The Pall Mall Gazette proclaimed, - "Every nerve should be strained to prove that the disaster has only stiffened our resolution to hold aloft the flag of England in face of every foe...England must not and will not, turn her back before a savage enemy." (3) The tone of the Liberal provincial paper, the Leeds Mercury was almost exactly the same, "We too can show the world that we are made of the same stuff as the heroes of the Nile and that having undertaken a task which came to us in the path of

(1) Ibid.

(2) Daily News, 6th February 1885.

(3) Pall Mall Gazette, 5th February 1885.

duty, neither discouragement nor danger, nor any sordid consideration of self, will induce us to turn back leaving that task unaccomplished." (1) It took the Liberal press some time to come to the refreshingly brief conclusion of the Echo on 7th February that if Gordon was alive he should be rescued "but if dead, we have no quarrel with the Soudanese or their leader." (2)

The alternative to the conquest of the Sudan, was at first widely thought to be a general disruption in the Near East. A correspondent of the Foreign Office put the typical view, - "The retention of Khartoum is necessary to save the whole of Egypt, the North of Africa and parts of Asia, even India, from being overrun by barbarism and anarchy." (3) Mahdism was pictured as a threat to the rest of the Empire, - its religious implications were expected to disturb the whole Moslem world. "If the surging wave of fanatical Islam is not to spread through Arabia, Asia Minor, North Africa and even India itself, the Mahdi's destructive career must be checked at once." (4)

(1) Leeds Mercury, 6th February 1885.

(2) Echo, 7th February 1885.

(3) F.O. 78/3711, Henry Jephson to F.O. 21st March 1884.

(4) England, 14th February 1885.

Richard Temple, in an article in the Contemporary Review considered that the moral ascendancy of the British in India would be very much weakened by the humiliation Britain had suffered in the Sudan, - the image of British strength and authority would be shattered. (1)

The Liberal press subscribed to much the same view, "...the fall of Khartoum may have a serious and far extending effect on the the whole of our dealings with the Oriental races just now." (2) But when the feared Moslem explosion did not occur, and even Egypt was relatively safe from the Mahdi, these comments lost much of their validity.

There was of course an indignant Conservative rush to blame the Government for the Gordon debacle. A number of Conservative Clubs sent resolutions stressing disgrace and humiliation; (3) one from Leicester Conservative Club is typical, expressing "...strongest censure of, and contempt for, the vacillating policy which has brought

(1) Contemporary Review, March 1885, pps.304-314, Sir Richard Temple, "The Mahdi and British India."

(2) Daily News, 6th February 1885.

(3) See Scotsman 7th February 1885. England 14th February 1885. Salisbury MSS. C/6, letter book 1881-7, items 146, 148, 153.

disaster on British arms, and such ignominious disgrace upon the honour and prestige of the British nation." (1)

There was no sense of proportion among Conservatives, no inkling that perhaps the defeat at Khartoum was relatively unimportant when set against the total foreign policy of Britain. What was important to Conservatives was the loss of face involved in the fall of Khartoum. They were highly irritated by even a minor defeat, - they could not tolerate anything except resounding victory. They were also highly sensitive to foreign opinion, - a placard at Dungannon declared "our nation is becoming a byword to the world through the bungling ... of the so-called G.O.M." (2)

A speaker at Handsworth Conservative Workingmen's Club said the Government had "dragged the flag of England through the dust." (3)

At Dublin Orange Lodge a resolution was passed saying that the Government "has disgraced and degraded the British Empire in every part of the globe." (4)

(1) F.O. 78/3838, Leicester Conservative Club to F.O. 5th February 1885.

(2) The Times, 14th February 1885.

(3) Handsworth Gazette, 22nd September 1885.

(4) England, 21st March 1885.

The Patriotic Association held two meetings in London, - the first on 18th February, of friends and admirers of Gordon, had only a small audience of one hundred people. (1) But the second on 25th February in Knightsbridge, was so crowded that an overflow meeting had to be held. The platform included the usual group of Conservative M.Ps. such as Stafford Northcote and Edward Stanhope. (2) A further meeting consisted mainly of City financiers, representatives of the Stock Exchange and Corn Exchange, and voted to continue the war. (3)

Anti-Government meetings were held in Manchester on 25th February, Mansfield on 5th March and Kidderminster on 6th March. (4) They were all Conservative organised; the pressure for an expansionist policy was largely identified with political Conservatism. Even the local Parliamentary Debating Societies, which modelled their procedure on the House of Commons, discussed the Sudan

(1) The Times, 19th February 1885.

(2) Ibid, 26th February 1885.

(3) Ibid, 5th March 1885.

(4) Manchester Guardian, 26th February 1885,
The Times, 6th March 1885,
England, 14th March 1885.

from a party point of view, repeating arguments which had been used in the House of Commons. (1) Most of them passed votes of censure on the Liberals. (2)

The fall of Khartoum was the signal for the development of a Gordon cult. Due to his exciting career Gordon had been fairly well-known before he set off for the Sudan in 1884. The suspense of a year's waiting and the tension of the additional six days from 5th February to 11th February when his death was finally confirmed, culminated in an outburst of sentimental eulogy. A biographer of Gordon wrote, - "such days were like a lifetime of anxiety, and every fresh addition of the papers, every scrap of news, was read with an eagerness which proved that General Gordon was not only a hero to be admired, but a man to be loved." (3) On 11th February many papers appeared in mourning, with

(1) Local Parliaments had increased rapidly between 1879 and 1884, when there were about 200 societies. Subscriptions varied from a few pence to ten shillings, the most usual amount being 2/6d. Most of the members appeared to have had a middle class background, and the Parliaments were looked upon as training grounds for local councillors or perhaps M.Ps., and as a kind of information bureau for voters. See Debater, 3rd May 1884, 17th November 1883.

And The Local Parliament Handbook, edited by J.T. Gale, Manchester 1883.

(2) Debater, 23rd February, 23rd March, 23th April 1885.

(3) Eva Hope, The Life of General Gordon, London 1890, p.431.

black borders.

Even Radicals admired Gordon; because of his sympathy with the Sudanese they tended to regard him as a crusader on behalf of oppressed peoples, and hoped for the success of his mission. There was great confidence that he would single handed, solve the Sudan problem to the satisfaction of Conservatives and Liberals alike. The Manchester Guardian wrote in 1884, "The despatch of General Gordon to the Soudan is an excellent measure." (1) Many people optimistically agreed with the Times, "The very magic of his name is expected to produce a potent effect on friends and foes alike." (2) Even Socialists were not immune to Gordon worship, an editorial in Justice declared "it is a very serious matter to send a man like Gordon to his doom, and no Government can have the right to sacrifice him as the Liberal seem inclined to do. Right or wrong, Gordon went to Khartoum as the envoy of the people of England, and we ought to get him out of his dangerous mission if we can." (3) When Belfort Bax wrote criticising Gordon

(1) Manchester Guardian, 21st January 1884.

(2) The Times, 25th January 1884.

(3) Justice, 26th March 1884.

and declaring that the aim of the Sudan mission was the institution of capitalism, another S.D.F. member W.H.P. Campbell replied that Gordon's life was "as blameless, honest, truthful, single-purposed and self-forgetting as any Socialist could wish...Gordon's sympathies have always been with the poor and oppressed, and I firmly believe if we could get him over here and explain to him what we Socialists are driving at, he would join our ranks tomorrow." (1) Part of Gordon's attraction was his ability to appear in a number of roles which appealed to different groups in the community, - the unselfish ascetic, the rescuer of oppressed peoples, the Christian soldier-saint, the advocate of Imperial expansion; in the last resort he was a useful stick with which to beat the Liberal Government.

Liberals and Nonconformists joined in praise of Gordon in 1885. The Daily News announced, "No soldier since the days of the crusades ever fascinated attention in the same way, and aroused the same half-poetic, half-mystic, enthusiasm as Gordon." (2) The Echo, while not

(1) Ibid, 24th & 31st May 1884.

(2) 6th February 1885.

approving of his disregard of instructions at Khartoum, deplored "the death of a man who was cast in heroic mould..." (1) The Nonconformist and Independent admired "the noblest life that has been lived in our century." (2) To J.K. Cross, Liberal M.P. for Bolton, Gordon's actions "raised him in the opinion of the Anglo-Saxon race, into the position of a demiGod for his unselfish heroism." (3) The 5th February was "Black Thursday" to a wide cross section of the population. There were not many people like Blunt who on 5th February "could not help singing all the way down in the train." (4) There were only a few dissident voices from the extreme Radical press, such as the Salford Weekly News which remarked that Gordon was "a battle loving general fond of praying and fighting.." who had "failed in a foolhardy enterprise." (5) The Quakers with their pacifist tradition could not "join

(1) Echo, 11th February 1885.

(2) 12th February 1885.

(3) Daily News, 12th February 1885.

(4) W.S. Blunt, Gordon at Khartoum, p.373.

(5) 6th February 1885.

in the hero worship now offered to General Gordon." (1)

The theme of "soldier and Christian" appealed especially to the Church of England. A number of Gordon memorial services were held on 13th February, (2) and at some churches muffled peals were rung on the news of Gordon's death. (3) There were many Gordon sermons, some at Nonconformist churches; in spite of Gordon's doctrinal peculiarities, he was regarded as a modern day saint. The Dean of Gloucester said "...the most conspicuously Christ-like man of his day had just crowned a Christ-like life with a Christ-like death." (4) And the Dean of Lichfield, -"Whatever good was done, was not his work, but the work of God through him...In another Church such a man as Gordon would have been canonised by a Papal decree." (5) Gordon the saint and martyr appealed to the traditions of muscular Christianity, and also provided a link between Christianity and Imperialism. William

(1) Friend, March 1885.

(2) The Times, 14th February 1885.

(3) Ibid, 12th February 1885.

(4) Quoted in Annie Besant, Gordon judged out of his own mouth, London Freethought Publishing Company, 1885, p.5.

(5) Quoted in Durham University Journal, June 1955, Vol XV1, Richard Hill, "The Gordon Literature."

Sinclair Macdonald of St. Stephen's Westminster equated betrayal of Gordon with betrayal of the Empire, "a nation which has acted in the way in which we have been acting during the past twelve months, is unfit any longer to carry out those high destinies with which God had at one time entrusted us." (1) Gordon's example was linked with the idea of an Imperial mission, as Jowett said in his sermon at Balliol, "...we follow the path in which he has shown us the way; not desiring to acquire military prestige or national glory, but that we may restore peace and freedom and order to one of the most oppressed regions of the earth." (2) A Church of England clergyman on hearing of the relief expedition plans in 1884, "wrote to the Times to say that if others would go, I would shoulder a musket and enlist in a voluntary expedition." (3) The C.M.S. had a particular interest in Gordon. At a meeting for young men on 24th March 1885, the Earl of Cairns linked the Gordon

(1) Quoted in Annie Besant, Op cit, p.5.

(2) Quoted in Eva Hope, Op cit, p.436.

(3) Gordon and England, a sermon preached at St. Stephen's Westminster, 22nd February 1885, by William Macdonald Sinclair, London 1885, p.15.

mission with the destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race to colonise and convert the world. (1) The memory of Gordon "almost dominated the meeting..E.A. Stuart roused the meeting to the utmost enthusiasm by advocating a Gordon Memorial Mission to the Soudan. There had been no thought of this kind in the mind of the committee; but there was no resisting the spontaneous burst of approval from all parts of the country..." (2) The committee in fact, on circularising its supporters, found that there was great interest in the Mission, and a fund was started. (3) By February 1886 this seemed to have reached about £2,500, mainly collected by local associations, Cambridge, Bath and Tunbridge Wells figured largely in the subscription lists; there were also substantial contributions from private individuals belonging to the C.M.S. This plan of course depended upon British control of the Sudan for its implementation; it was brought up again in 1898.

The C.M.S. were still applauding references to Gordon at

(1) Church Missionary Intelligencer, May 1885.

(2) E. Stock, History of the C.M.S., Vol 3, p.318.

(3) C.M.S. MSS. General Committee Meeting Minutes 1884-91, Minutes of meeting of 13th April 1885.

the end of 1886, ⁽¹⁾ and commemorative sermons were still being preached in Sandringham Church in 1899. ⁽²⁾

Gordon represented a number of trends in Imperial thought; he epitomized responsible Empire and its links with Christianity. He was frequently compared with the African missionary Livingstone, though neither of them was conventionally Imperialist. It was thought that "Gordon's place in history will be by Livingstone's side.. A beseeching voice asking for pity for these people comes from Ilala and now from Khartoum also; the fate of Africa hangs on the reply." ⁽³⁾ He appeared to fit into the philanthropic anti-slave trade tradition, which was by 1885, turning to Imperial expansion to achieve its objectives.

He also personified adventure, bravery and romance, the qualities which pervaded Imperialist literature. One popular view of Gordon was that "Arthur and the Round Table had no more blameless knight. He was Lancelot and Galahad

(1) Church Missionary Intelligencer, November 1886.

(2) William Sinclair Macdonald, op cit.

(3) Quoted in Quarterly Review, April 1885, pps. 450-79, reviews of lives of Gordon, p.479.

both in one...He has brought something of the glamour and brightness of the heroic ages into the dull realities of these prosaic times." (1) Dr. Birkbeck Hill wrote,

"Where could the like of Gordon be found, - where in the pages of history or romance ? In Spenser's "Faerie Queen", in Cromwell's "Letters", in George Fox's "Journal", in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress", in "Robinson Crusoe" in the story of the Israelites, in the Gospel story, he may be found." (2) Gordon, as the flow of biographies proved, had found a place among national heroes.

There was a Gordon Birthday Book, in the form of a diary, with an extract from Gordon's writings under each date, and a collection of Gordon songs and sonnets, written 1884-5, and suitably entitled, "A Cry of Anguish", "Too late" "The noblest end" and finally "To Gordon in heaven." (3)

(1) Eva Hope, Op cit, p.436. This can be compared with W.T. Stead's comments on the Jameson Raid, see Review of Reviews, February 1896, "it transports us at a bound to the Elizabethan days when such "daring deeds" of high enterprise, were regarded with more favour than in our more tranquil time."

(2) Quoted in Annie Besant, Op cit, pps. 3-4.

(3) J. Rutter, Gordon songs and sonnets, 1884-5, London 1887. —

In astonishingly bad verse, the author called "for the heart and eye of Beaconsfield.." and bemoaned that the Sudan might have been "gathered within Imperial destinies, beneath the shelter of Victoria's rule." Gordon in this book was identified with the aims of Imperial expansion in Central Africa.

A pamphlet of 1889, Who is the White Pasha ? A story of coming victory, thought that Gordon was still alive and living in the Sudan, about to "reappear to fulfill some of the great prophecies of the last day.." (1)

There were Gordon windows in cathedrals and parish churches and the Gordon cult had a distinctly religio/military flavour, - a Gordon Boy's Brigade was started in Liverpool, and when Colonel Fred Burnaby, a leading member of the Primrose League, was killed in the Sudan, a Bradford meeting decided to build a drill hall as a memorial, though a statue and stained glass window were also suggested. (2) The England office was selling Gordon medallions at one shilling each, and the periodical began a prize Gordon poem competition. (3) In the Primrose League habitations there

(1) published in London 1889.

(2) England, 28th February 1885.

(3) Ibid, 21st February 1885.

was a big demand for Sudan lectures and lantern slides, - especially popular was a lecture "Gordon and Uluat, a double desertion", and there was an endless series of Gordon charitable funds. (1) In October 1885 a Conservative candidate in Handsworth, proudly made a point of mentioning that "he was the last Englishman who shook hands with Gordon before he started on his last march across the desert." (2)

A national Gordon Memorial Fund was started; it was eventually decided to build a hospital in Cairo with the proceeds. There were a variety of noted men on the Mansion House Committee, - the Duke of Cambridge, Cardinal Manning, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Salisbury, Lord Granville, the Marquis of Hartington and Gladstone. (3) Conservatives objected to Gladstone's presence on the committee, and in fact lost no time in blaming the Government and especially Gladstone for Gordon's death.

The theme "too late" became an accusation against the Liberals for not having sent the relief expedition earlier.

(1) Janet H. Robb, Op cit.

(2) Handsworth Gazette, 13th October 1885.

(3) Daily News, 25th February 1885.

At a Patriotic Association meeting, extravagant eulogies of Gordon were contrasted with "storms of hooting and groans" which greeted Gladstone's name. (1) Gladstone was hissed and jeered at in the streets, and was particularly criticized for his insensitivity in attending the theatre on the night that news of Gordon's death was received, - this episode was commemorated in a poem in England: - "So you went to the play Mr. Gladstone, While the country lay shrouded in gloom, While Gordon you brave hearted victim, Lay slaughtered in distant Khartoum." (2)

A biographer of Gordon, referring to the delay in sending a rescue force, remarked "Just here reader, I have got to pull myself up with a round turn, for so angry do I feel when I think of the treatment of Gordon and the disrespect and neglectfulness shown to him, that I feel inclined to dash my pen through the paper." (3) The Liberal Government were presented as the villains of the story in many Gordon biographies. This idea was perpetuated by Conservative politicians, (4) and encouraged

(1) England, 28th February 1885.

(2) Ibid.

(3) G. Stables, For Honour, not Honours, London 1885, p.323.

(4) Quote from a speech by Sir Stafford Northcote, 2nd June 1885, in J. Hirst Hollowell, Did the Gladstone Government abandon General Gordon? No. London 1885.

by Queen Victoria's ungrammatical open telegram to Gladstone, "These news from Khartoum are frightful, and to think that all this might have been prevented and many precious lives saved by earlier action is too fearful." (1) In the music halls the initials G.O.M. - Grand Old Man, were reversed to read M.O.G.- Murderer of Gordon. (2) The issue as put by Stanley Leighton, M.P. for North Shropshire, became "Gordon or Gladstone." (3) "We must stand on Gordon's side or else on Mr. Gladstone's side..To vote for Gladstone will be to sanction the desertion of Gordon. Will the English people pronounce so infamous a verdict and thus accept responsibility for the basest deed of modern times." (4)

The anti-Gordon reaction is summed up in two pamphlets by J. Hirst Hollowell, a Congregational minister, and Annie Besant a freethinker. Secularists naturally felt some aversion to "...the impossible image of hybrid heroism, saintliness, St.Michael-and-the-Dragonism, and pietism that has been held up..." (5) Contradictions could

(1) P. Magnus, Op cit, p. 32/

(2) Ibid, p. 372.

(3) National Review, August 1885, pps. 725-33, Stanley Leighton, "Gordon or Gladstone?"

(4) Ibid.

(5) Annie Besant, Op cit,

be found in Gordon's attitude to slavery, he had for example compromised with the slave dealers, and he could be reduced to a "soldier of fortune, honest and loyal to his employers." (1)

Hollowell's pamphlet was a sober account of how Gordon had disobeyed his instructions and so brought his fate upon himself. It was essentially a defence of the Liberal Government. (2)

The pro-Gordon party could hardly deny that there had at least been some confusion over the way in which Gordon interpreted his orders, but they held that he had been morally right to remain in Khartoum instead of deserting the loyal Arabs, and moreover they approved of his disregard of the Government, since they agreed with him that Britain ought to smash the Mahdi. It was therefore little use appealing to Conservatives on the facts of Gordon's disobedience, since this was the very thing they were likely to applaud.

But the Gordon enthusiasm among the public was short-lived. According to Allen it had subsided by October 1885, and

(1) Ibid.

(2) J. Hirst Hollowell, Op cit.

played little part in the General Election in that month. (1)
 The Radical press certainly, thought that African affairs were of little interest to the mass of the population and could not compete successfully for attention, with home politics; The Echo thought "In most great centres of population, the destinies of Egypt are viewed with comparative indifference." (2) And Reynolds News on Egypt and Sudan concluded "The people of England outside the City of London and Westminster care very little about it." (3)
 As a writer in the National Review, put it, - on the death of Gordon "public opinion behaved admirably" but "public opinion heard that the Soudanese expedition was to be abandoned and that the Government no longer saw any occasion to break the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum, and public opinion manifested every sign of acquiescence in the change of plan." (4) There were few protests when the troops were withdrawn. The Gordon enthusiasm had mainly been

(1) A.S.S.MSS. E3/4, Allen to Baroness Burdett-Coutts, 5th October 1885.

See also F.A. Channing, Op cit.

(2) Echo, 16th May 1884.

(3) Reynolds News, 2nd March 1884.

(4) National Review, July 1885, op cit, p.660.

generated by the Conservative Party, especially the Primrose League elements and the Church of England with its missions. Voters with Conservative leanings agreed with a policy of expansion, but Liberals on the other hand were opposed to the war. A good deal depended on the individual's position in the political spectrum. To a Conservative it was evident that the Government's policy was humiliating and degrading, but from a Liberal point of view it was obvious as the Daily News put it "that the war in the Soudan is not popular." (1)

(1) 3rd April 1885.

Pressure Groups and Sudan schemes 1885-1896.

After the general interest died down in April 1885 two related schemes developed for the Sudan, organised by anti-slavery and commercial interests. F.W. Fox was holding meetings at the home of Forster to discuss peaceful commerce. ⁽¹⁾ But Forster also attended meetings at the house of Baroness Burdett-Coutts, together with the Earl of Shaftesbury, Cardinal Manning, Allen and H.M. Stanley. ⁽²⁾ It was suggested that a Company on the lines of the Borneo Company should be formed to open markets and suppress the slave trade. ⁽³⁾ This was partly a revival of the Wyld scheme of 1882, but was turned down by the Egyptian Government. ⁽⁴⁾

Attention then turned to a plan to send an expedition to the Sudan via the Congo. James Hutton and T.F. Buxton of the A.S.S., C.M.S. and a Liberal M.P. who had been concerned with the Congo agitation of 1884 (see below) were interested. It was suggested that Stanley who had worked for the International Association in the Congo should lead the expedition. ⁽⁵⁾ In July a meeting was held at

(1) A.S.S. MSS. C57/122, F.W. Fox to Allen, 12th Oct. 1887.

(2) Anti-Slavery Reporter, May 1885.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid.

(5) E3/4, Allen to Baroness Burdett-Coutts 29th May 1885.

Mansion House, with the Mayor presiding, to promote the scheme. Stanley spoke, and the audience included William Burdett-Coutts M.P. Moberley Bell the editor of the Times, Horace Waller and other A.S.S. members, Chesson of the A.P.S., some London bankers and financiers and Mr.s Surtees-Alnott of Gordon rescue expedition fame. (1) But differences of opinion existed among the leading promoters, - Allen, Samuel Baker and V.L. Cameron preferred the Nile route and the completion of the Berber-Suakin railway, to the Congo route. (2) The scheme also found it difficult to get off the ground, - Cameron wrote of the Mansion House meeting, "There was a great deal of talking and enthusiasm in word, but unless I am mistaken the pecuniary returns were about £20, and this in answer to an appeal for £100,000 to enable the Congo-Soudan expedition to be despatched and placed on a permanent footing." (3) There seems to have been some idea that the International Association would pay the expenses. (4)

Allen tried to enlist the services of Joseph Thomson

(1) Anti-Slavery Reporter, August 1885.

(2) E3/4, Allen to Baker 31st July 1885.

(3) Fortnightly Review, August 1885, V.L. Cameron, "The future of the Soudan," p.139.

(4) E3/4, Allen to Baker, 11th August 1885.

the explorer, to lead the expedition, but Thomson refused. ⁽¹⁾
 It was likely that the A.S.S. were already suspicious of Stanley's treatment of the natives and preferred Thomson, who was known to use only peaceful methods. This, combined with the disinclination of Allen for the Congo route may explain why he was not a member of the committee to organise the Emin Pasha expedition in 1886.

The Congo-Soudan expedition plans came to nothing in 1885, but they have strong links with the Emin Pasha scheme promoted towards the end of 1886. The same route through the Congo was proposed, the expedition was again to be led by Stanley and many of the same people were concerned, the Burdett-Coutts, Horace Waller and Hutton. William Mackinnon a Scottish trader very interested in African development now came on the scene. In 1877, he had made an unsuccessful bid for a concession from the Sultan of Zanzibar, for a large section of East/Central Africa. He now intended to use the Emin expedition to explore the area between Lake Victoria and the coast, on its return from the Sudan. Stanley in May 1887 on his way round the coast to the Congo, persuaded the Sultan to sign the concession

(1) Ibid, Allen to J. Thomson, 7th August 1885.

which became the foundation of the Imperial British East Africa Company. (1) Many members of the Emin. committee were later directors of the Company.

Emin Pasha was a German (his real name was Eduard Schnitzer) who had been appointed to rule Equatorial Province by the Egyptians, and who since the Mahdist revolt had been in an isolated and dangerous position. The Foreign Office had considered the possibility of an official rescue expedition in September 1886, but the idea was rejected as too dangerous and impracticable. (2) As Salisbury said "Emin Bey was not placed in his present position by us, and he is not a British subject." (3)

In the course of the Emin agitation distinct pressure groups interested in Imperial expansion in Africa, emerged. Emin's position was publicised as a result of his letter to Mackay of the C.M.S. Uganda Mission. Mackay by 1886, was becoming convinced that the success of the mission depended on some British intervention in Uganda. The murder of Bishop Hannington on the borders of Uganda in 1885 had been particularly disturbing. Mackay wrote to the C.M.S. "I have

(1) H.H. Stanley, In Darkest Africa, London 1890, Vol 1, pps.5-6.

(2) F.O. Print, 403/78, Memorandum by Iddesleigh 25th November 1886. Iddesleigh to Portal 9th October 1886, Brackenbury to F.O. 29th September 1886.

(3) Salisbury MSS. C/6 letter book 1881-2, letter of 16th November 1886.

no desire to see a British Protectorate established in East Africa, but I do desire to see the whole region established on a similar footing to the Congo State." (1) The C.M.S. at home was less convinced at this time about the merits of Government interference in Uganda, (2) but the missionaries supported the Emin expedition and hoped that it might help the Uganda mission. (3)

Allen had also received a letter from Emin, and the A.S.S. carried on its own sub-campaign for an Emin expedition, which does not seem to have had any connection with the Emin committee. Allen published Emin's letter in the Times on 29th October, and wrote asking the Government to rescue him or to support him with financial help, though "not suggesting any measure of a military character for his relief." (4) The A.S.S. hoped that the Sudan would be ruled by Emin as "an independent power". (5) On 4th December they asked the Foreign Office to receive a deputation re Emin and in reply were told about the Mackinnon scheme which was by then well under way. (6)

(1) F.O. Print 403/78, Mackay to C.M.S. 22nd August 1886.

(2) See Church Missionary Intelligencer, January 1887.

(3) Ibid, February 1887.

(4) E2/10, Minute book, minutes of meeting of 5th November 1886.

(5) Ibid, minutes of meeting of 6th April 1888.

(6) F.O. Print 403/78, A.S.S. to F.O. 4th Dec. 1886 and reply.

In Scotland Felkin was also working separately from the Mackinnon party, - he feared that an expedition led by Stanley would not be noticable for its "pacific" methods of dealing with the natives. ⁽¹⁾ The A.S.S. nominee to lead the expedition was again Joseph Thomson. ⁽²⁾

The Scottish Geographical Society which had been exceptionally interested in African affairs since its foundation in 1884, also took up the case for an expedition. Prompted by Felkin, it sent a resolution to the Foreign Office on 23rd November, ⁽³⁾ and the Dundee branch followed suit. ⁽⁴⁾ The Royal Geographical Society also petitioned the Government. ⁽⁵⁾ The Geographical Societies from being interested in African exploration were beginning to press for annexations there. Some of the chief subscribers to the Emin fund were members of the R.G.S. ⁽⁶⁾

The Emin expedition received £10,000 from the Egyptian Government, and Mackinnon and his friends provided

(1) E3/4, Allen to H.M. Stanley, 24th December 1886.

(2) C67/59, Felkin to Allen 20th November 1886.

(3) F.O. 84/1794, S.G.S. to F.O. 23rd November 1886.

(4) F.O. 84/1795, Dundee branch of S.G.S. to F.O.

(5) C57/59, Felkin to Allen 20th November 1886.

(6) H.M. Stanley, Op cit, p.33.

£10,000. (1) The Committee included Sir Francis de Winton, (2) Sir Lewis Pelly, (3) and Horace Waller. It was no secret that their object was to "form a large trading colony from the Mombasa base." (4) The aspirations of the Mackinnon clique agreed with the attitude of the Government, which did not wish to be directly responsible for the dangers and expense of an East African Empire, but was prepared to encourage private enterprise. There was no shortage of volunteers for the expedition, (5) and the members finally chosen had almost all had military experience, often in Africa. (6)

The expedition did not fulfill the pacific expectations of the philanthropists. The return of the party in 1890

(1) F.O. Print 403/78, Memorandum by Fergusson 20th November 1886.

(2) Sir Francis de Winton, 1835-1901, Governor of Gibraltar 1870-5, and secretary to another Imperialist the Marquis of Lorne during the latter's Governor Generalship of Canada, 1878-83. He was an administrator in the Congo 1885-6. And a member of the R.G.S.

(3) Sir Lewis Pelly, was formerly an administrator in India.

(4) F.O. Print 403/78, Op cit.

(5) Parliamentary Papers, Vol L1, 1890, correspondence respecting Mr. Stanley's expedition for the relief of Emin Pasha. Stanley to Euan Smith, 19th December 1889.

(6) Ibid.

was followed by a controversy over the treatment of natives. (1)

Stanley had made use of the services of a Swahili slave dealer, Tippoo-Tib, in the Upper Congo, and was accused of using slaves as porters. The A.S.S. and the Scottish humanitarians were quite alienated from Stanley by 1890. (2)

Nor were the bright hopes of the expedition fulfilled. There were disagreements among the party, and Emin was not impressed by Stanley, and later defected to the cause of German colonialism. (3) The only positive result was the foundation of the I.B.E.A.Co.

After the return of the Emin expedition, Egypt and the Sudan received no particular attention till the start of the Dongola expedition in 1896, which inaugurated the reconquest of the Sudan. There were still a few commercial schemes being mooted for the Sudan, the most persistent promoters being Fox and Russell. They outlined their plan, "... a settlement with the Soudanese through the medium of a company, chartered by the British Government, with power to construct a railway, as an initiating and

(1) For the anti-Stanley, philanthropist view see H.R. Fox-Bourne The other side of the Emin Pasha Expedition, London 1891.

(2) C57/63/64, Felkin to Allen, 28th January 1890 & 11th June 1890.

(3) H.M. Stanley, Op cit, & H.R. Fox-Bourne Op cit.

absolutely essential step, from Suakin to Berber, and all other works necessary for the development of the resources of the country." (1) The proposed exports included cotton, gum, ivory, ostrich feathers, wheat and hides, and the imports "Manchester cotton goods, linen and hardware." (2) Fox was a member of the Aborigines Protection Society, a humanitarian who was strongly opposed to the use of armed force against the natives of the Sudan. The Sudan Famine Relief Committee, started under A.P.S. auspices in 1890, was one of his projects. (3) He wrote frequently to the Government, and got some support from the Times which on 3rd June 1887 ran an editorial in favour of his scheme. But Fox in spite of his pacifist ideas was in line with other African commercial promoters in his preference for chartered companies with administrative power over their territory, and in his belief in "that remarkable aptitude for colonization which

(1) Henry Russell, Op cit, p.325.

(2) Ibid, p.349.

(3) Ibid, p.334.

is the peculiar characteristic of her (England's) people." (1)

There was also a scheme for opening up the Upper Congo region to ivory trading, promoted by a Mr. J.T. Wills in 1886, in which Fox might also have been involved. (2) Yet another plan was communicated to Salisbury by Edward Dicey in 1896, - a group of "well-known Egyptian capitalists" with "long experience of the Soudan trade" would apply to the Egyptian Government for a concession to develop the Sudan. (3)

All these plans were abortive. The most noticable development in relation to Egypt and the Sudan in the years 1886 to 1896, was the gradual acceptance of the occupation of Egypt by Liberals, - which prepared the ground for the surprising Liberal agreement with the reconquest of the Sudan. Only a few individuals like Blunt, and the peace societies kept up any pressure for the evacuation of Egypt. Egypt settled comfortably into the position of a respectable dependency, - with a similar

(1) Ibid, p.355.

(2) A.S.S.MSS. E3/4, Allen to Felkin, 19th November 1886.

(3) Salisbury MSS. Vol 99, Edward Dicey to Salisbury 3rd July 1896.

status to India. It could almost be regarded as part of the "Old" Empire, rather than as a dangerous new excursion. A Liberal Government was in power from 1892-5, but had no more dreamt of leaving Egypt than the Conservatives had. Many Liberals visited Egypt and were duly impressed by Cromer's reforms. No doubt many of them experienced the same kind of metamorphosis as Chamberlain who said "I admit I was one of those ...who regretted the necessity for the occupation of Egypt ... having seen what are the results of this occupation ... I have changed my mind ... We have no right to abandon the duty which has been cast upon us ... They (the Egyptians) are not able, they cannot be able, to stand alone." (1)

By keeping in mind the civilizing mission, many Liberals were able to avoid having a guilty conscience where Egypt was concerned. Liberal anti-Imperialism was slowly being eroded during the Egypt/Sudan events.

It was also in the period 1882-5, that pressure groups which could be relied on to push for British

(1) Joseph Chamberlain, Foreign and Colonial Speeches, pp. 41-3.

expansion in Africa, began to be clearly delineated. They fell into three overlapping categories: - the Conservatives fringe groups which derived their impetus from Disraelian Imperialism and tended to emphasise psychological motives, - the desire for honour and prestige for instance, but which also urged commercial expansion for new markets; the humanitarians, who rested heavily on missionary and anti-slave trade platforms, - commerce was of course inextricably connected with plans to eradicate the slave trade; and the commercial interests which played a minor role in the Imperialist agitation re Egypt and the Sudan, but whose arguments helped to broaden the philanthropic and Conservative case.

In the absence of any articulate mass public opinion on the merits of African expansion the pressure groups attained a particular importance.

Tropical Africa and the Pressure Groups, 1883-1889.

Interest in tropical Africa tended to be centred in a few commercial and humanitarian pressure groups. There was not much development of wider public opinion on expansion in this region.

In West Africa commercial interests were predominant; here trade preceded the flag. In the Niger Delta and Niger Valley, companies based in Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow, had been trading in palm oil for many years. (1) From 1879, Sir George Goldie's United Africa Company dominated the trade; it obtained a charter in 1886 giving it a monopoly of the trade and administrative rights, and under the title of the Royal Niger Company it proceeded to buy up competing French firms. (2) It was diplomatic pressure in the form of French threats in the Niger basin which finally decided the British Government to opt for annexation in West Africa.

In the same way there was considerable trade carried on between Britain and the Congo, mainly by

(1) K.O. Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, Oxford 1956, p.204.

(2) J.E. Flint, Sir George Goldie and the making of Nigeria, London 1960.

Liverpool and Manchester firms, which was valued at two million pounds per year in the early 1880's. (1) This trade was basically in ivory, palm oil and other tropical raw materials, in return for cotton goods and hardware. The free trade system favoured British commerce, and the groups interested in the Congo trade did not particularly want a British Protectorate there, but felt satisfied with the Belgian International Association which had been developing the Congo since 1877. The French explorer de Brazza was also making treaties in the Congo hinterland, and it was to counter French claims that Britain in 1882, began to formulate an agreement with Portugal; Portugal's claims to the banks of the Congo were to be recognised, and Britain in return was to obtain low tariffs on her goods. (2)

The treaty was signed in February 1884, but was never ratified and was abandoned in June. It was finally dropped owing to French and German opposition. (3) But

(1) Roger Anstey, Britain and the Congo in the 19th century, Oxford 1962, p.31.

(2) Robinson, Gallagher and Denny, On cit, pps. 169-170.

(3) Ibid, pps. 171-4.

there had been strong agitation against the treaty in England as well, led by William Mackinnon of the British Imperial Steam Navigation Company, and James Hutton, a Manchester merchant who was later a director of two African Companies. (1) Mackinnon, V.L. Cameron, T.F. Buxton M.P., Sir John Kennaway, a Conservative M.P. who was also an important lay member of the C.M.S., and Sir Rutherford Alcock, president of the Royal Geographical Society, were present at the 1876 Brussels Geographical Conference, where the International Association was launched. (2)

The Royal Geographical Society was especially interested in African exploration and as a result of this, in various schemes for the colonization of the continent; a British Committee of the International Association was formed under its auspices in 1877, though it was eventually decided to conduct purely British exploration. (3) Many of the people interested in Imperial expansion were also members of geographical societies in England and Scotland, - Hutton for

(1) For a full account of the agitation see R. Anstey, Op cit.

(2) Ibid, p.57 et seq.

(3) Royal Geographical Society Circular, African Exploration Fund, London 1877, p.6.

example helped to form the Manchester branch of the Geographical Society. A number of other people found their interest in Africa stimulated by the adventures of the explorers, - F.W. Fox wrote "In common with many others I have for the past twenty-five years, followed with great interest the various incidents and discoveries connected with the opening up of Africa, - the Labours of Dr. Moffat, Livingstone, Speke and Baker, no doubt stimulated that interest." (1)

Also in the agitation were H.M. Stanley on his return from the Congo where he had worked for the International Association, W.E. Forster, three Manchester M.Ps. - Jacob Bright, J. Slagg and W. Houldsworth, and the Liverpool M.P. E. Whitely. The A.S.S. entered the campaign via Rev. James Lang, a member of the Committee, who was also an associate of Mackinnon and well-known in Brussels. (2) The Baptist Missionary Society which had a Congo Mission also dreaded the thought of Portuguese control.

But the largest stir was among the Chambers of Commerce directed by Manchester, and the chief element in the agitation

(1) A.S.S.MSS. C57/122, F.W. Fox to Allen 12th October 1887.

(2) R. Anstey, Op cit, pp. 123-5.

was fear of Portuguese trade restrictions. Hutton at the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, declared, "...if this treaty is ratified, the liberty of every British subject who trades in this part of Africa, and the whole control of our trade there, will be thrown away to Portugal." (1) And the London Chamber of Commerce petitioning the Foreign Office in February 1884, thought that by the adoption of the treaty "...British commerce in this part of the world will receive what may amount to its death blow." (2)

There was also a good deal of feeling against Portugal on account of its tendency to encourage or acquiesce in the slave trade; this particularly affected the A.S.S. Protestant missionaries of course, also resented the idea of becoming subject to a Catholic power.

Antagonism to Portugal was combined with a rather naive enthusiasms for Belgian enterprise, - the Birmingham Ladies Negroes Friends Society in opposition to the treaty said, - "All that the King of the Belgians in connection with Stanley's energetic and now peaceful courses of

(1) The Congo Treaty, Report of a meeting in Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 17th March 1884, p.3.

(2) Chamber of Commerce Journal, 7th April 1884.

exploration has done, would be endangered. We cannot adequately express our admiration for all that the King has attempted for the development of Africa." (1) Even the Aborigines Protection Society believed in the philanthropic pretension of the Congo Free State, and the Quaker M.P. J.W. Pease moved a resolution at one of their meetings, - "...it justifies the hope that in time to come many other uncivilized countries with their inhabitants, may be placed under similar guardianship and redeemed from barbarism by equally peaceful and Christian means." (2)

Suggestion that the British Government should declare a protectorate was carefully avoided, - all that was wanted was a continuation of the old informal system of free trade on the Congo, which for some time had worked in the favour of British merchants. Hutton in fact asserted "'Africa for the Africans"...It is, we maintain, and injustice to the Africans to attempt to deprive them of their rights and to allow any country to take from them their country." (3)

(1) Reports of Birmingham Ladies Negroes Friends Society, 1884.

(2) Transaction of the A.P.S. 1885.

(3) The Congo Treaty, Report of a meeting in Manchester Chamber of Commerce, opcit, p.16.

The agitation started in 1882, while the negotiations for the Portuguese treaty were in progress. The A.S.S. for example contacted M.Ps. and Allen in March 1883, gave some lectures to the Bristol Chamber of Commerce on the Congo, as a result of which the Chamber sent a resolution to the Government opposing the treaty. ⁽¹⁾ The main channel of protest was the Chamber of Commerce network. A number of Chambers sent resolutions in March and April 1883. But the main period of the agitation was in the first half of 1884, prompted from Manchester, "Articles and letters from newspapers, extracts from books and pamphlets were sent to members of both Houses of Parliament, Chambers of Commerce and foreign persons of note..." ⁽²⁾ The Manchester Chamber of Commerce in particular exchanged a formidable amount of correspondence with the Foreign Office. ⁽³⁾ Memorials against the treaty were sent from the Chambers at London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Birmingham, Sheffield, Wolverhampton, Huddersfield, Halifax, Hull and Swansea. ⁽⁴⁾

(1) A.S.S.MSS. E3/4, Allen's letter 13th-31st March 1884. The A.S.S. had more contacts in Bristol than in any other provincial town.

(2) The Times, 30th April 1884.

(3) Chamber of Commerce Journal, 5th April 1884.

(4) Ibid.

The only Chamber which seems to have resisted the pressure against the treaty was Bradford, where, in spite of W.E. Forster's persuasion, a resolution was passed accepting the treaty on condition that duties on British goods were no higher than those for other nations. ⁽¹⁾

A minority in the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, led by Sir Joseph Lee resented the way in which the agitation had been worked up. Lee claimed that "...the trade to the river in textile fabrics has been greatly overstated, the extent does not reach £200,000 a year and is not increasing. The character of the fabrics is the commonest and lowest description manufactured in the country.." ⁽²⁾ He objected to the Board of management of the Chamber "...using the funds of the Chamber in the most lavish manner with the view of raising and maintaining an agitation throughout the country." ⁽³⁾ But Lee's resolution against the Hutton faction was rejected by sixteen votes to eight. ⁽⁴⁾

This agitation then was mainly economic in content with some moral overtones, and was carefully organised by a group of people, who appeared to have been working for

(1) The Times, 1st May 1884.

(2) The Times, 30th April 1884.

(3) Chamber of Commerce Journal, 5th June 1884.

(4) Ibid.

the interests of King Leopold's Congo enterprise. ⁽¹⁾

In East Africa on the other hand, economic motives took second place to philanthropy. Since the 1840's Britain had held a position of influence over the Sultan of Zanzibar who ruled the islands off the east coast of Africa and a strip of mainland territory; by diplomatic pressure and assiduous naval patrols, Britain managed to prevent most slave trading, though not slave holding, in his dominions. ⁽²⁾ The British Consuls at Zanzibar, Sir John Kirk from 1873 to 1886, and Euan Smith from 1886 to 1891, were important figures in East African diplomacy. They were the only link with the few Europeans in the interior, since the Sultan exercised little actual control away from the coast.

British penetration of the interior was confined to a few explorers, traders and missionaries. A great impetus to missions had been given by Livingstone's journeys of the 1860's and 1870's. The Livingstone tradition was particularly potent in developing Scottish interest in Africa. By 1874, the Free Church of Scotland had established a mission on Lake Nyasa, and the Church

(1) This is the conclusion arrived at by Roger Anstey, Op cit.

(2) L.W. Hollingsworth, Zanzibar under the Foreign Office 1890-1912, London 1953.

Scotland at Blantyre in the Shire Highlands. The High Church of England Universities Mission to Central Africa also had a mission on Lake Nyasa. The London Missionary Society opened a mission on Lake Tanganyika, to the north, in 1874, after a donation from a wealthy Leeds supporter. The Church Missionary Society had a freed slave colony at Freretown near Mombasa on the coast and in 1879 branched out with a mission on Lake Victoria in Uganda. (1)

Missionaries played a leading part in the opening up of East/Central Africa along the chain of lakes running from Lake Victoria in the north, through Lake Tanganyika and along the "Livingstone Road" to Lake Nyasa and the head waters and tributaries of the Zambesi. The Missions also commanded a formidable array of support, financial and moral, at home. They often measured their annual income in hundreds of thousands of pounds. In 1882, of 15,700 parishes in England and Wales of the Church of England, over 5,000 contributed to the C.M.S. and 8,000 to the S.P.G. (2) The S.P.G. income for 1882 was £142,612, (3) and the C.M.S.

(1) See Roland Oliver, The Missionary factor in East Africa, London for a full account of the missions.

(2) Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Report for 1882.

(3) Ibid.

yearly income in the period 1880 to 1900 varied from £200,000 to £300,000. ⁽¹⁾ Most of the money was contributed in small amounts from annual subscriptions, special sermons and meetings and missionary boxes. ⁽²⁾ The C.M.S. was multi-organisational with a Lay Workers Union, a Younger Clergy Union, a Ladies Union, a Sowers Band for children and a Gleaners Union which alone had 112,500 members by 1898. ⁽³⁾ The circulation of the magazine Gleaner from 1895 to 1899 was annually 82,000. The income of the L.M.S. in 1892 was £129,000. ⁽⁴⁾ The Free Church of Scotland missions obtained £61,437 in 1884-5. ⁽⁵⁾ And the Foreign Missions of the Church of Scotland obtained the relatively small sum of £25,157 in 1897. ⁽⁶⁾

Apart from legacies and donations from wealthy supporters, the Missions claimed to obtain most of their funds in small amounts from middle and working class supporters. They

(1) E. Stock, Op cit. p.708.

(2) Ibid. p.713.

(3) Ibid. p.354 et seq.

(4) Richard Lovett, The History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895, London 1899. See Vol 2.

(5) Free Church Monthly and Missionary Record, June 1885.

(6) R.W. Weir, Foreign Missions of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh 1900.

tended to complain of the neglect of the aristocracy and wealthier church goers. (1) A typical collection for the S.P.G. mission was described for the village of Sutton Waldron, near Shaftesbury, in 1880; this village with a wholly agricultural population of under 250 people had contributed £100 per year. This was the result of frequent pleas from the pulpit, a monthly sermon on missionary work, and supplying over half the houses with missionary boxes. (2)

The Missionary Societies made great efforts to arouse interest by means of sermons, lantern slides, exhibitions and special missionary weeks in various towns. Quite a large section of the church going population must have been well steeped in missionary propaganda by the end of the century. Descriptions of African life were often given in missionary magazines and a good deal of knowledge about tropical Africa must have spread as a result of missionary efforts.

Missionary activity in itself did not necessarily result in requests for Government protection. The Livingstone

(1) S.P.G. Report 1881.

(2) Ibid, 1880.

tradition of moral persuasion was strong, and home supporters in spite of conspicuous lack of success and a high death rate due to disease in Africa, were extremely optimistic. The history of the L.M.S. mission at Ujiji of Lake Tanganyika illustrates the difficulties of an African mission; in the period 1877 to 1893, and after a total cost of £40,000, only twenty converts had been made, and of thirty six missionaries sent out, eleven had died and fourteen had retired due to ill health after very brief spells of service. ⁽¹⁾ But the Free Church Monthly continued to assert "One cheering thing about modern missions in Africa is this, that the difficulties encountered do not dispirit the churches engaged, but only inspire them with greater courage and devotion." ⁽²⁾ The departure of C.M.S. missionaries for foreign fields was marked by emotional and packed services at Exeter Hall. To call on the help of British diplomacy or force, would be to admit the inadequacy of the Gospel alone, to obtain conversions.

However by the 1880's new factors were beginning to

(1) Richard Lovett, Op cit, p.669.

(2) Free Church Monthly and Missionary Record, November 1885.

emerge in East Africa. The Portuguese were beginning to claim part of the interior from their colony of Mozambique; there were fears of German encroachment, and from 1885 a wave of Arab expansion and slave trading in the Lakes region, which had in turn been sparked off by rumours of the European scramble.

The Missions had in any case a well-developed sense of Empire; the S.P.G. in an account of its parish work thought "...the building up of our colonies, the history of our English rule in India...come before us as important matters on which lectures may be given." (1) The S.P.G. could not help but be concerned with Imperial expansion, "One thing is clear, that the influence of England and even of its actual Empire, increases, and will increase, as by some force external to itself; and wherever the flag and the commerce of England may force a way, it is the earnest desire of the Society as the representative of the Church to be found in the forefront." (2) Empire and Missions were almost regarded as identical, as a leader in the Church Missionary Intelligencer remarked, "how great a

(1) SPG, Annual Reports, 1896.

(2) Ibid, 1884.

thing, how complex a thing, how responsible a thing, God has given us in our English Empire. And our English Empire involves, remember, our English Christianity." (1) The Missions easily fitted into the role of carrying out the divine destiny by spreading civilization and Christianity to Africa. By the 1880's they were starting to demand that their efforts should be backed up by Imperialist intervention. By 1888, the Free Church Monthly had reached the conclusion, "The missionary ... must make up his mind to take his life in his hands and go where the Master calls him; but the interests involved here are not mere missionary interests. The cause is that of civilization and barbarism, of freedom against slavery... The question is thus a much wider one than that of the maintenance of our mission at this point or that. It is nothing less than this, - Is Arab and Mohammedan influence or England's and German and Christian influence to prevail in Central Africa?" (2) It was felt that missionaries would be safer and more successful if Imperial control were present to help break down

(1) Church Missionary Intelligencer, July 1885.

(2) Free Church Monthly and Missionary Record, April 1888.

the patterns of tribal life. After the murder of Bishop Hannington and the persecution of converts, the C.M.S. in Uganda began to urge the extension of British influence though the home organisation was at first doubtful. (1)

But it was the slave trade which provided the best justification for Imperial expansion. The slavery issue was a highly emotive one. The accounts of Livingstone's travels and other explorations had provided and publicised the details of Arab slave raids. More information percolated back via the missions. The head of the Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission reported, - "The Arab slave trade is making frightful progress...it is not slave trade, it is massacre of the most barbarous type...desolation of the fairest lands, lands where the natives were at peace, where industry and thrift and happiness ruled." (2) Pathetic accounts were given of the miseries of the march to the coast which was thought to be much worse than the existence of the slave who had reached his destination, - a paper to the Scottish Geographical Society in 1885 described the sufferings of

(1) See Church Missionary Intelligencer, September 1887.

(2) Quoted in James Stevenson, The Arabs in Central Africa and Lake Nyasa, Glasgow 1888, p.11.

women carrying ivory and children, "The double burden was almost too much and still they struggled weakly on, knowing too well that when they showed signs of fatigue, not the slaver's ivory but the living child would be torn from them and thrown aside to die..Still we could not help shuddering as in the darkness we heard the growl of the hyena along the track and realised only too fully the reason why." (1)

Though the A.S.S. were in theory attached to a non-violent policy, they could not help hoping for the expansion of British influence. They tended to rely on legitimate commerce to supersede slave trading, but as V.L. Cameron declared in 1888, "...you need sufficient physical force to prevent the low class of slaver setting himself up in opposition to you." (2) Slavery was immoral but it was also unprofitable to British trade, and obstructed the moulding of African society on the model of Victorian Britain. As Cameron put it, "Slaves do not do one half or one quarter of the work that a free man will do, and so long as such an immoral thing as slavery is

(1) Quoted in James Stevenson, Op cit.

(2) Journal of the Society of Arts, 1st March 1889, V.L. Cameron, "Slavery in its relation to trade in tropical Africa."

allowed to continue, so long will you experience the difficulty of getting people to engage in other means of making a livelihood." (1)

The anti-slave crusade was complicated by the fact that some European explorers appeared to be abetting the slave trade by purchasing slaves to use as porters and servants. Horace Waller persistently campaigned against the use of slaves in the Emin Pasha expedition, in East African expeditions and in the Congo. (2) He caused some embarrassment to the A.S.S. in 1892, when he publically asserted that the British Imperial East Africa Company had used slaves on the Mombasa-Lake Victoria route, (3) (see below p.247).

The legitimate trade interests in East Africa focussed in the 1880's on the African Lakes Company, a Scottish undertaking, set up in 1874 to provide goods for the two missions. In this Company humanitarian aims were as important as purely commercial intention, - "it would be an effort not to secure dividends but to realise the life-

(1) Ibid.

(2) Universities Mission to Central Africa, MSS. A V1, Miscellaneous Letters, Waller to Penney 27th September 1888.
 Horace Waller, Ivory Apes and Peacocks, An African Contemplation, London 1891, pps. 45-50.

(3) Horace Waller, Heligoland for Zanzibar, or one island full of free men for two full of slaves, London 1893, pps.9-10.

aims of Livingstone." (1) An initial capital of £10,000 was subscribed largely from Scotland. The Company was managed in Africa by two brothers J.W. and F.L.M. Moir, and in Scotland by the chairman of the Company James Stevenson. In its attitudes the Company was inseparable from the Scottish missions. At Blantyre there was also a firm of planters, the Buchannan Brothers, also Scottish.

The commercial possibilities were stress in 1889 when the African Lakes Company was thinking of applying for a charter on the pattern of the Niger and East African companies. Captain Lugard who had helped the Company fight the Arabs, gave a paper to the British Association listing the products of Nyasaland as minerals, ivory, oil seed and plantation crops such as coffee, tea and cloves. There were also possibilities for Europeans to live on the higher land. (2) There had been one or two suggestions for economic exploitation of the region; in May 1885, for example, the Foreign Office received a request from a David Lindsey, who wished to purchase land near the Usambara mission of the U.M.C.A. to cultivate coffee, tea, cocoa and cinchona

(1) W. P. Livingstone, Laws of Livingstonia, p.2.

(2) Lugard MSS. Rhodes House Library, Oxford, § 35, Nyasaland, Speech by Lugard 13th September 1889. See also § 34/83, Lugard to Laws, 5th January 1890.

with African labour. A petition to the Sultan of Zanzibar was signed by merchants, bankers and six members of Parliament, ⁽¹⁾ but nothing apparently came of the scheme. Mackinnon had also been dabbling in East African schemes from 1877.

As in the Congo agitation there was considerable anti-Portuguese feeling on the part of the missions and groups interested in East Africa. The Portuguese at Mozambique were beginning to assert their theoretical claims to the interior, and they also controlled the navigation of the Zambesi River, the life line to the Nyasa region. It was felt that they encouraged slave trading or at the best did not actually oppose it, and that they practised a veiled form of slavery in their colonies. Percy Anderson an official at the Foreign Office, summed up in 1885, the objections of the Scottish missions to the Portuguese, - "...they object so much to Portuguese domination that they say they would resist annexation by force. They mistrust their officials, they object to the Protestant missions being put under a Catholic power, and they feel that it is wrong that territories discovered,

(1) F.O. 84/1738, Africa Slave Trade, Domestic and Various May 1885. David Lindsey to F.O. 23rd May 1885.

settled and civilized by Englishmen should be taken possession of by Portugal." (1) Frequent references were made to Livingstone, whose work was thought to have helped establish British priority to the region. A typical memorial from the Scottish Churches and the Lakes Company, read "Following in the footsteps of David Livingstone, the Scotch people have set themselves to open up the Lakes districts of Central Africa to civilise the region of Lake Nyasa and expose and repress the slave trade." (2) The next step was an assertion that the British were a nation with natural talents for rule in Africa, whereas the Portuguese were unfitted for the high civilizing mission, - "The pretensions of the colonial Portuguese would be ludicrous were they not so very serious a hindrance to the progress of African advancement...In all ages of the worlds history, the dominant and civilizing nation has had to overcome the barbarous or the effete one, and to hold it in subjection before the lower race can be raised, revived and civilized." (3) A member of the Scottish Geographical

(1) F.O. 84/1735, Africa Slave Trade, Domestic and Various, 13th-31st March 1885, Memorandum on British Protectorate in Nyasa, 23rd March 1885.

(2) F.O. 84/1733, Africa, Slave Trade, Domestic and Various 1st-24th February 1885, Scottish deputation to F.O. 20th Feb.

(3) Nineteenth Century, September 1888, pps. ⁴³⁹⁻⁵⁰ A. Oswald Crawford, "Slavery in Central Africa."

Society asserted that the Portuguese had degenerated "Through the intermixture of alien races and other causes, are bankrupt financially, deficient in moral fibre and in all that constitutes a great people." (1) Horace Waller thought that Britons had a particular aptitude for African colonization, "...the native races...are as quick to side with the frank and joking Englishman as they are repelled and exasperated by the presence of the expatriated Portuguese, who have so long been an incumbus to East Africa." (2) The general conclusion was that "Great Britain has totle deeds to Nyasaland which no other Power can show." (3)

When in 1889, the Government seemed about to make a treaty with Portugal which would give her part of the Nyasa region, the issue became an important Imperial question, compared with Majuba and Khartoum in emotive significance. Horace Waller thought "Nyasaland is a Majuba Hill of higher latitudes, with Boers, Portuguese and Germans round its

(1) A.L. Bruce, Cape to Cairo, or Britain's sphere of influence in Africa, Edinburgh, 1892, pps. 3-4.

(2) Horace Waller, Ivory Apes and Peacocks, p.38.

(3) F.O. 84/1924, Africa Slave Trade, Domestic and Various, 1st-23rd July 1888, Scottish Geographical Society to F.O.

base. It is for us to hold or bolt." (1) From a problem for the humanitarians, it had become an issue of British prestige. The Times stated in April 1889, - "We have had the dishonour of Khartoum and of Majuba Hill. Pray God we may not have Nyasa added to the list. Loss of honour for a nation is worse than the loss of territory, worse even than the loss of a battle." (2) V.L. Cameron, planning a relief expedition to help Lugard in Nyasa in 1889, urged, "By the memories of Livingstone and Gordon I appeal to the British nation not to abandon Lugard, and not to wait until it is too late" (3)

By 1889, Nyasaland was connected with the Cape-Cairo route ambitions. It formed a link in the chain of British territory, stretching down from Egypt and Uganda, and up from Rhodesia where the Imperial British South Africa Company which received its charter in June 1889, was operating. It thus acquired particular Imperial importance, summed up in an article in the Pall Mall Gazette on 28th May

(1) Horace Waller, Nyasaland, Great Britain's case against Portugal, London 1890, p.V1.

(2) Lugard MSS. S 35, Nyasaland, extract from the Times of 23rd April 1889.

(3) Ibid, extract from the Times 11th May 1889.

1889, - "The truth is, we must either advance or recede. There is no standing still. If we recede now, other powers will sooner or later take our place, a permanent barrier will be established between the two principal spheres of British influence in Africa, and South Africa will be definitely cut off from the possibility of expansion to the northward." (1) Nyasaland was not regarded as suitable for annexation on its own merits alone, but was seen as a crucial test case in British participation in the scramble.

The Scottish missions had been anxious as early as 1879 about possible Portuguese expansion into the Nyasa region, and James Stevenson was writing apprehensively to the Foreign Office, again, in 1883. It was in 1885 that the Scottish interests began to put pressure on the Government to intervene in East/Central Africa. They asked outright for a British protectorate in the Nyasa area; on 20th February 1885, a deputation from the Scottish Churches and the Lakes Company, backed by the A.S.S. saw Granville and asked "that Her Majesty's Government authorize the African Lakes Company to hoist the British

(1) Ibid, extract from Pall Mall Gazette, 28th May 1889.

flag at their stations in that district, and that they be supported by formal consular jurisdiction." (1) In effect the deputation claimed "that British protection should be granted to British subjects on those waters." (2) On 14th March Stevenson informed the Foreign Office that the Lakes Company was claiming legal rights to land which had been ceded to it by the chiefs, and formally requested, "...the establishment of a British Protectorate in the district extending from the lower Shire to the south end of Lake Tanganyika, under the jurisdiction of a consul or British resident." (3) This was backed up by individual memorials from the two Scottish Churches and the Buchanan Brothers. (4)

At the Foreign Office Percy Anderson was mildly disposed towards a protectorate and hinted that as an alternative the Lakes Company might be granted a charter, but Granville

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- (1) F.O. 84/1733, Africa, Slave Trade, Domestic and Various, February 1885, Scottish deputation to F.O. 20th February 1885.
- (2) See report in A.S.S. minute book E2/10, minutes of meeting held 6th March 1885.
- (3) F.O. 84/1735, Africa Slave Trade, Domestic and Various, 12th-31st March 1885, James Stevenson to F.O. 14th March.
- (4) F.O. 84/1734, Africa Slave Trade, Domestic and Various, 25th Feb. - 12th March 1885, Buchanan Brothers to F.O. 4th March 1885.
F.O. 84/1735, op cit, Free Church of Scotland to F.O. 31st March 1885.

had no intention of taking on any Central African responsibilities, Lord Derby commented on the dangers of a protectorate which could only be reached through Portuguese territory, and Lord Kimberley remarked "I have never seen map of this district and have no distinct ideas on the subject." (1)

The humanitarians by 1885 had become advocates of Imperial expansion. By 1886 they had learnt from their previous failure not to ask the Government "...for any impossible protectorate.." but for an arrangement with Portugal "...which shall leave the British community in undisturbed possession of the freedom which they now enjoy and from interference in their attempts to develop the country." (2) But the Lakes Company had been hopefully proceeding to make treaties with the native tribes as a barrier against a Portuguese advance. (3)

By 1888, the Portuguese expeditions to the Zambesi coincided with the desperate war which the missions and Company were fighting on Nyasa against the Arab slave raiders.

(1) F.O. 84/1735, op cit, Memorandum on British protectorate in Nyasa 23rd March 1885.

(2) MSS. of U.M.C.A. C 4 Portuguese East Africa, Waller to Penney, secretary of U.M.C.A. 4th February 1886.

(3) Ibid.

Their position was made more precarious by the fact that Lord Salisbury was inclined to sacrifice the Nyasa missions to Portugal in return for her recognition of British claims in southern Zambesia. (1) The immediate problem for the missions and Company was that the Portuguese hindered the transport of weapons and ammunition along the Zambesi, which were required for the Arab war. A number of resolutions reached the Foreign Office urging the Government to influence Lisbon to allow the transit of goods and weapons; the Scottish Geographical Society and the U.M.C.A. joined in these requests. (2) The question of a charter for the Company was brought up again, but the Foreign Office was not particularly impressed by the Nyasa interests. (3) All that the Government could suggest was that the exact amount of armaments must be specified and the

(1) Robinson, Gallagher and Denny, Op cit, p.223 et seq.

(2) F.O. 84/1920, Africa Slave Trade domestic and various, 25th April - 11th May 1888, S.G.S. and U.M.C.A. to F.O. (See replies by F.O. 30th April 1888)

(3) Lister, one of the permanent F.O. officials noted "The African Lakes Company wanted to make an aggressive war on the Arabs and to secure a claim to the help of H.M.G. by getting the Consul (Hawes who had been vice-consul in the Shire district since 1883) to act with them, - he refused to fall into the trap." F.O. 84/1920, op cit, note on back of letter from Professor Lindsey to F.O. 30th April 1888.

Portuguese would then be asked to let it through. ⁽¹⁾ This did not of course satisfy the Company which adopted a lofty tone, - "It is not for us to remind your Lordship that the Zambesi was discovered by David Livingstone, and has since been developed by British capital." ⁽²⁾ On 24th April 1888, a London meeting was convened by the Scottish missions, attended by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, ⁽³⁾ Lord Aberdeen and Lord Rosebery. ⁽⁴⁾ A deputation to Salisbury on 27th April followed at which the three resolutions passed at the meeting were presented. The first two, urging free transit for British goods on the Zambesi and the suppression of the slave trade, had caused no difficulty, but the final resolution which had originally asked for a British sphere of influence in Nyasaland, had been altered to a vaguer

(1) F.O. 84/1921, Africa Slave Trade, Domestic and Various, 12th-25th May 1888, F.O. to Lakes Company 17th May 1888.

(2) Ibid, Lakes Company to F.O. 23rd May 1888.

(3) Lord Balfour of Burleigh was the organiser of the Scottish Conservatives and a friend of Lord Salisbury's

(4) Free Church Monthly and Missionary Record, June 1888.

format asking the Government to take what steps seemed best to them to secure British interests; the first draft had met with the objections of some M.Ps. who "were ignorant of the exact meaning of the term "sphere of influence", - (or possibly realised only too well the dangerous implications of the phrase.) (1) The A.S.S. were present at the meeting and deputation and on 24th May held a joint meeting with the A.P.S. to urge free navigation on the Zambesi. (2)

In 1889 the situation became critical. H.H. Johnston the explorer and consul, had been sent to Lisbon and had negotiated a treaty which abandoned the Nyasa region to Portugal and linked Lake Tanganyika with Matabeland by a strip of land west of Nyasa. (3) At the same time the Arab war had become more serious. The Lakes Company set on foot a Nyasa Defence Committee to raise money for a private expedition to relieve Lugard and the defenders of the Nyasa missions. (4) V.L. Cameron was one of the chief

(1) F.O. 84/1924, Africa Slave Trade, domestic and various, 1st-23rd July 1888, list of resolutions passed at 27th April meeting.

(2) A.S.S.MSS. E3/7, letter book,

(3) Robinson, Gallagher and Denny, Op cit, p.227.

(4) Lugard MSS. S35 Nyasaland, extract from the Times 17th April 1889.

promoters of the fund and the Council included the Scottish aristocrats, the Duke of Portland, the Earl of Aberdeen and Lord Aberdare, ⁽¹⁾ members of the Lakes Company and of the missionary organisations. Of twenty two subscribers to the fund all but three were Scottish. ⁽²⁾ The objective was to raise a sum of £10,000, of which almost £3,000 had been obtained by the end of April 1889. ⁽³⁾

A few members of the U.M.C.A. were anxious about the ethics of an armed expedition, ⁽⁴⁾ and the conflicting aspirations of missionaries were exposed in the formula, "As a mission of course, we could take no part in action such as is proposed. But as individuals all must feel that unless this marauding horde of bandits be checked, there can be but little prospect of mission work in the country." ⁽⁵⁾

The news of the Portuguese treaty sparked off a specifically Scottish agitation to keep the Nyasa mission

(1) First Baron Aberdare 1815-95, had been a Liberal M.P. in the 1860's till his peerage ended his political life. He was chairman of Goldie's National African Company in 1882, and in 1881 president of the R.G.S.

(2) Lugard MSS. S35, Nyasaland, Anti-Slavery Defence Fund Circular.

(3) F.O. 84/1993, Africa Slave Trade, domestic and various, 16th-30th April 1889, V.L. Cameron to F.O. 23rd April.

(4) See U.M.C.A. MSS. A V1, Miscellaneous letters, Mr. Brunel to Penney, 28th February 1889.

(5) Ibid, note on Nyasa Defence Fund, March 1889.

field as part of the British sphere of influence. The central aspect of the agitation was a monster petition sent to the Foreign Office on 30th April 1889, containing over ten thousand signatures. (1) It was signed not by the Scottish public at large, but mainly by ministers and elders of the Scottish Churches. (2) Meetings were held in Glasgow and Edinburgh and the subject of Nyasaland was mentioned in the press. The Glasgow Herald gave the matter some publicity, "The footing which has been gained in the Lakes region cannot be relinquished..." (3) A few provincial English papers such as the Worcester Herald and the Nottingham Guardian, opposed the cession of Nyasaland to the Portuguese. (4)

When Rhodes arrived in England at the end of March 1889, it was suggested that the proposed new South African Company might also take over Nyasaland. This broadened the agitation; but it was never very widely spread. The Spectator

(1) F.O. 84/1994, Africa, Slave Trade, domestic and various, 1st-14th May 1889, Burleigh to F.O. 5th May 1889. (No list of signatures was preserved by the F.O.)

(2) Glasgow Herald, 18th May 1889.

(3) Ibid, 17th April 1889.

(4) Lugard MSS. S 35 Nyasaland, press cuttings from the Worcester Herald, 7th June 1889 & Nottingham Guardian 30th May 1889.

when it suggested that interest in Africa included "...all Scotchmen, most religious Englishmen and a host of wealthy philanthropists," (1) was roughly accurate in this case; the Nyasa agitation was almost wholly Scottish and Church based. "All Scotchmen" should have read all Scotchmen interested in missions, and Geogrpahical societies might have been added to the list. Lugard on his return to Britain in mid 1889, toured the country speaking to Geogrpahical societies, (2) and the Scottish Geographical Society had been specially interested in Africa since its foundation, and listened enthusiastically to lectures by Lugard and Stanley. (3) But the only examples of a wider interest were resolutions from Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and from Lancashire and Cheshire Working Men's Association, in 1888, protesting against the Portuguese blockade of the Zambesi. (4)

Salisbury had some personal sympathy for the

(1) Ibid, extract from the Spectator, 1st June 1889.

(2) S34/83, Lugard to Laws 5th January 1890. Lugard also wrote an article for the Contemporary Review, September 1889.

(3) See Scottish Geographical Magazine, 1890, 1891.

(4) See F.O. 84/1923, for the Working Men's Conservative Assoc. And F.O. 84/1924, for Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce resolution, 24th July 1888.

Scottish interests in Nyasaland, partly due to his friendship with Balfour of Burleigh, one of the organisers of the Defence Fund. He doubted Johnston's ability to persuade the missions to accept the treaty, ⁽¹⁾ and refused to let Johnston go to Edinburgh till after the Scottish deputation to the Foreign Office which followed the petition. He wrote "...this would be fixing an official sanction to Johnston's exhortations which I am not prepared to do, - I do not want to have the appearance of putting pressure upon these Scotch people to abandon what they believe to be their rights." ⁽²⁾

But it was Rhodes' determination to preserve northern as well as southern Zambesia from the Portuguese, which finally squashed the treaty. This made Nyasaland no longer an isolated and not very important problem, but an element in the big push northwards from the Cape, with all that this implied for future relations with the Transvaal and Germany. Rhodes began to try to amalgamate the Lakes Company with the new British South Africa Company which was granted a charter in June 1889. The Lakes Company had been

(1) F.O. 84/1993, Africa Slave Trade, Domestic and Various, note on V.L. Cameron's letter to F.O. 23rd April 1889.

(2) F.O. 84/1994, Africa Slave Trade, Domestic and Various, note on Burleigh's request, for a deputation, 5th May 1889.

thinking in terms of obtaining a charter for itself to govern Nyasaland for some time. Lugard noted on 21st June, - "Gigantic schemes are in the wind and a plan is afoot to annex the whole of Central Africa, practically, and incorporate it under a Royal Charter." (1) Negotiations were started between the South Africa Company and the Lakes Company but nothing materialised. (2)

In September 1889 the Shire Hills were placed under British protection, (3) and in May 1891 a protectorate was declared over Nyasaland. (4) A curious compromise was arrived at, whereby the costs of the Nyasa Protectorate were paid by the British South Africa Company to the tune of £10,000 per annum until 1894. (5) The Lakes Company, though many of its shares were bought up by the South Africa Company, maintained an independent position on Lake Nyasa; the Foreign Office noted in 1894 "Their distrust of the Company is notorious" (6) and this dislike of the B.S.A.Co.

(1) S 34/230, Lugard to his cousin 21st June 1889.

(2) S 34/227/8/9, B.S.A.Co. to the Colonial Office 1st July 1889.

(3) Robinson, Gallagher and Denny, Op cit, p.

(4) Roland Oliver, Sir Harry Johnston and the scramble for Africa, London 1957, p.152.

(5) Ibid., p.189.

(6) F.O. 83/1309, General Africa, Miscellaneous January to February 1894, Memorandum on Nyasaland.

extended to the missions, - "...subjugation to the Company would be almost as distasteful to the settlers and missionaries ...as the rule of Germany or the Free State." (1) The conflict no doubt developed from the aggressively commercial aims of the B.S.A.Co. and their disregard for the rights of the natives, - the Rhodes type of Imperialism had little in common when put into practice, with that of the philanthropists. In 1894 the Foreign Office assumed direct control of Nyasaland, and the new protectorate was greeted with unfeigned delight by the Missions and the A.S.S. (2)

The humanitarians also approved of the protectorate over Zanzibar acquired in 1890 after an agreement with Germany to exchange Zanzibar for Heligoland, and finally to delimit British and German spheres of influence in East Africa. The Government had for some time been under pressure from the philanthropists to abolish slavery in Zanzibar and Pemba, and a protectorate was regarded as a major step in this direction. In 1894-5 the A.S.S. the

(1) Ibid.

(2) See A.S.S. minute book E2/11, minutes of meeting 7th February 1890.

Friends anti-slavery committee, ⁽¹⁾ and Horace Waller ⁽²⁾ bombarded the Government with requests to abolish the legal status of slavery in Zanzibar.

The pressure for British control in East/Central Africa, had come from philanthropic interests, mainly from the Missions and the A.S.S. The position of the Missions in relation to the slave traders on the one hand and the claims of Portugal on the other, was the crucial factor in the demands for Imperial control of the Nyasa region. Until the British South Africa Company came on the scene commerce played only a subsidiary if complementary role.

(1) See Friends Quarterly Examiner, October 1895.

(2) Horace Waller, The case of our Zanzibar slaves, why not liberate them? London 1896.

The agitation for the retention of Uganda, 1891-4.

A case history of pressure group activity.

This agitation was aimed at the extension of British rule in the East African interior, the area including Uganda and part of Kenya, which had been declared a British sphere of influence in 1890.

The Uganda question was closely connected with the position of the British East Africa Company, which in 1887 had obtained a concession from the Sultan of Zanzibar to economically exploit the area which later became the British sphere, and a charter from the British Government which gave it administrative powers.

The founder of the Company was Sir William Mackinnon, (1) who was also the Company's president. The vice-president was Lord Brassey, a former Liberal M.P. The directors of the Company included Thomas Fowell Buxton of the Church

(1) Mackinnon, the Scottish director of the British India Steam Navigation Company, had been concerned in a number of African schemes. He had plans for a Zanzibar concession as early as 1877, but his proposals were turned down at the instigation of Lord Salisbury, see Marie de Kiewit, "The History of the I.B.E.A.Co. 1876-1895," London Ph.D. thesis, 1955, for an account of this incident and for a detailed history of the Company.

Missionary Society and Anti-Slavery Society; William Burdett-Coutts M.P.; commercial interests were represented by James Hutton, Alexander Low Bruce an Edinburgh brewer, J. M. Hall a Scots merchant and George Mackenzie a director of the B.I.S.N.Co, who took over the leading role in the I.B.E.A.Co. when Mackinnon's health declined in 1891.

Some directors had specific African interests, -- Sir John Kirk was the former British Consul in Zanzibar and Sir Lewis Pelly M.P. had served in India, East Africa and Persia in a diplomatic capacity. Aristocratic interests were represented by Lord Lorne. ⁽¹⁾ There appear to have been over five hundred shareholders, by the end of 1890, forty-five of whom were in India and who included three M.Ps. The average shareholding was over £1,000, and some shareholders held £5,000 worth of shares. ⁽²⁾

Most of the directors had some specific interest either in philanthropy or in Imperial affairs, and the objectives

(1) Marquis of Lorne, 1845-1914, was a Scottish aristocrat who married Princess Louise daughter of Queen Victoria. In 1868 he sat in Parliament as a Liberal M.P. but left the Liberal Party over Home Rule.

(2) F.O. 84/2243, Africa Slave Trade, Domestic and Various, 1st-11th March 1892, 1st March I.B.E.A.Co. to the F.O.

of the Company were never purely commercial, (little profit was in fact made), and economic motives were inextricably tangled with a wish to help missions, to diffuse British civilization, to abolish the slave trade, and a desire for Imperialist expansion. In 1890, partly at the suggestion of the Government, the Company extended their activities inland from the coast to Uganda, in spite of financial difficulties. ⁽¹⁾ The Company seems to have favoured Imperial expansion for its own sake as much as for the rather doubtful commercial gains.

In 1890 they sent Lugard to Uganda as the leader of an expedition which quickly became involved in a three cornered struggle between the British Church Missionary Society, the French Catholic Mission and the Mohammedan party. Not surprisingly the Protestant missionaries emerged as the dominant group.

But the expansion from the coast to Uganda put too great a strain on the resources of the Company which was rapidly running out of funds and was forced to contemplate

(1) Marie de Kiewit, Op cit.

withdrawing from Uganda.

There were two humanitarian groups in Britain especially concerned to prevent this, the C.M.S. and the A.S.S. The Company began to work through them to try to make the Government recognise its East African responsibilities. The Uganda question was thus presented to the public in a philanthropic rather than a commercial form. During the first stage of the agitation in 1891 the immediate aim was to find some means of subsidising the Company, which was eventually done by C.M.S. supporters. Early in 1892 the focus shifted to the Mombasa-Victoria railway for which Government aid was required. By September 1892, the Company wanted to persuade the Government to take over Uganda by annexation as a direct Imperial responsibility, the sort of action which Government as of both parties tried to avoid as much as possible. It was generally assumed that the retentionists had won when in November 1892, Sir Gerald Portal who was known to favour retention, was sent by the Liberal Government to report on the Uganda situation. Annexation was not announced till April 1894, though the Parliamentary debate on the question, - over the Ugandan estimates, - continued after this.

In 1891 the Company turned first to the C.M.S. who had a good deal to lose from the withdrawal of the Company. The progress of the mission had been stormy, marked by the murder of one of its missionaries Bishop Hannington in 1886, persecution of the native Christians and rivalry with the French mission and conflicting groups of Ugandan nobles. (1) The intervention of Lugard in Uganda at once improved and further imperilled their position; their immediate ascendancy was secured, but if the Company's force withdrew, serious disorder was considered almost certain to recur.

The chief intermediary between the Company and the C.M.S. was General George Hutchinson, formerly a member of the Indian army and on the C.M.S. executive committee. The Company required £40,000 to enable them to remain in Uganda for another year. On 31st August 1891 Kirk, Mackinnon and Lorne informed Sir Percy Anderson at the Foreign Office, verbally of their intention to withdraw from Uganda in funds were not forthcoming. (2) Three weeks

(1) E. Stock, Op cit, vol 3, p.419.

(2) Parliamentary Papers, Vol. LX11, C 6847, Uganda 1893-4.

previously Mackenzie had written to Hutchinson, suggesting that the C.M.S. might provide a sum of £10,000 and spelling out the position, "Should this fail, there is no alternative but for Lugard to withdraw immediately with the whole of his force, and the C.M.S. will have to look after their own interests as best they can." (1) A month later the figure of £16,000 was mentioned. Wigram the C.M.S. secretary, replied that the Society could not use its own funds for this purpose, but that the money might be raised by an appeal which he intended to organise as soon as possible. (2) The leading officials of the C.M.S. drew up an appeal signed by the president of the Society, Sir John Kennaway, (3) Hutchinson and Bishop Tucker of Uganda who was home on leave; they were the trustees of a "Proposed Uganda Guarantee Fund." (4) A draft version of the appeal had been revised by Mackinnon. (5) The C.M.S.

(1) C.M.S. MSS. Church Missionary Society headquarters, Waterloo Rd, Box on early Uganda, the occupation and the boat fund, G/YA7/1, letter from Mackenzie to Hutchinson 10th August 1898.

(2) Ibid, Wigram to Hutchinson, 14th September 1891.

(3) Sir John Kennaway was also Conservative M.P. for E. Devon.

(4) G/YA7/1, Printed circular of appeal.

(5) Ibid.

were anxious enough for British influence to be preserved in Uganda by force if necessary, but were uneasy about the impact of the appeal for funds for the Company, which was intended to be kept a secret from all except a few chosen members of the Society. The circular stated "for obvious reasons this appeal cannot be put before the general public. It must be confined to a few friends to whom God has given means which may enable them to help." It was suggested that twelve or fourteen friends should give £500 each, or that two or three wealthy supporters might find the whole sum. (1)

However the question had already be publicised in a dramatic manner at the annual meeting of the Gleaners, a C.M.S. supporters organisation, by Eugene Stock a lay member of the committee. After a speech by Bishop Tucker, Stock rose and made an impromptu appeal for money; £8,000 was given or promised at the meeting, where the audience appears to have been mainly female, (2) - the sums were all substantial varying from £50 to £1,000. (3) The donations

(1) Ibid.

(2) Record, 6th November 1891.

(3) The Times, 31st October 1891.

included "purses, gold watches, a bag of rupees and even four freehold cottages." (1) The audience obviously composed the well-to-do sections of society. The meeting dissolved amid "lusty cheers" and hymn singing.

In spite of the generous response, Stock's action was regarded as something of a faux pas by Mackinnon who wrote to Hutchinson a couple of days later, "I beg to express the hope that Mr. Stock's mistakes do not alter in any way the promised contribution." (2) Stock probably acted without the knowledge of other C.M.S. committee members, since there does not seem to have been any intention of extending the private appeal.

But the subject was further publicised by Bishop Tucker's appeal, formulated on 2nd December 1891, and which appeared in some newspapers the following day. This combined a request for £15,000 for the occupation fund, with a plea for £25,000 for a steamer on Lake Victoria. (3) The steamer question was not divorced from C.M.S. collaboration

(1) Pall Mall Gazette, 31st October 1891.

(2) C.M.S. MSS. G/Y A7/1, letter book, Mackinnon to Hutchinson 2nd November 1891.

(3) Ibid, Bishop Tucker's appeal 2nd December 1891.

with the Company, since the latter was to see to the transport and have some use of the boat.

The appeal which had the approval of Hutchinson and Kennaway, aroused some unfavourable newspaper comment, especially in the Pall Mall Gazette which remarked, "We cannot but think that the C.M.S. will make a mistake if it allows its agents to get mixed up in commercial enterprise in Africa. The British occupation of Uganda is very desirable, as also is the pushing of British wares. But does an appeal for these objects come within the proper range of episcopal function?" (1) Bishop Tucker, by this time on his way back to Africa, penned an angry reply, praising the directors of the Company, but avoiding specific mention of the occupation fund. (2) There were still some people, even Imperialists who took a traditional view of missionary activities. The C.M.S. used the Record, a Church of England weekly, to officially disassociate themselves from the appeal, stating "This is an individual act on the Bishop's

(1) Pall Mall Gazette, 3rd December 1891.

(2) Record, 8th January 1892.

part, which commits the Society to nothing. So far as we are aware the Society has no official cognizance of the appeal...It is important that this should be clearly understood, for already there are signs that in the public mind, the C.M.S. is regarded as financing the Company. " (1)

But in spite of the official excuses, the C.M.S. was in close communication with the directors of the Company regarding the organisation of Bishop Tucker's appeal. Especially useful was the Marquis of Lorne who was in constant communication with Hutchinson, and listed possible subscribers. (2) Hutchinson organised some advertising via the firm of Streets British and Colonial Advertising Company, which consisted of inserting lists of subscribers in the press. (3) The Company followed a deliberate policy of remaining in the background as much as possible; Sir Arthur Kemball one of the directors warned, "The Company can of course take no part in inviting public subscriptions." (4)

(1) Ibid, 4th December 1891.

(2) G/Y A7/1, Lorne to Hutchinson, 5th December 1891, 17th, 22nd December 1891.

(3) Ibid, there are a number of letter from Streets British & Colonial Advertising Co. to Hutchinson.

(4) C.M.S. MSS. G/A.C. 4/8, Ordinary Letters 1891, no. 1462, Kemball to Wigram, 31st October 1891.

While in January 1892 Mackinnon wrote, "We must keep the I.B.E.A.Co. out of the fight altogether," on the grounds that philanthropic arguments would beat away the Government. (1) But the Company gave considerable help in circularising the appeal, - Mackinnon drew up lists of people whom he thought might contribute, and Lorne agreed to the use of his name as an introduction, - Hutchinson wrote "Lord Lorne offered to let his name be mentioned as the "culprit" as he calls himself, who had directed attention to the names...I saw Lord Lorne at the Company's office and he will give all possible aid." (2)

The C.M.S. justified their activities with an argument which was to become familiar the following year, "We never asked for British protection; our missionaries sent no invitation to the Company.... but it must not be forgotten that the Company in the event of their withdrawal could not leave Uganda as they found it. The Protestant missionaries and converts have identified themselves with British interests and have thus become compromised in the eyes of the hostile parties." (3)

(1) G/Y A7/1, Mackinnon to Hutchinson 29th January 1892.

(2) Ibid., Hutchinson to Mackinnon 23rd December 1891.

(3) Gleaner, December 1891.

But the public response to the Bishop's appeal was poor. Contributions could either be sent to the Rev. H.E. Fox at Durham, or direct to Coutts Bank. Fox reported that the occupation fund was lagging behind the steamer fund, and reflected "The C.M.S. knows how to manage its spiritual affairs better than temporal." (1) By the 12th January 1892 he was communicating gloomily "I have had no more money during the last three weeks." (2) The Coutts account did not do much better. The total collected for the steamer was only £1,417, far short of the required amount, which was invested in Consols till 1895, when a start was at last made on constructing the boat. (3) But the occupation fund had only reached £191 by 14th January, (4) and Mackinnon was disappointed that the appeal had elicited so small a response. (5)

The £16,000 which the Company required from the C.M.S. was found, but the great bulk of it came from responses to the original private appeal. The result of this was known

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- (1) G/Y A7/1, Fox to Hutchinson 5th December 1891.
 (2) Ibid, Fox to Hutchinson, 12th January 1892.
 (3) Ibid, various letters from the trustees of the fund to Bank etc. 1891-5.
 (4) Ibid, a note of amounts raised, scribbled on back of notepaper, possibly by Hutchinson.
 (5) Ibid, Mackinnon to Hutchinson 29th January 1892.

fairly early, since the Company wrote to the Foreign Office on 11th November informing them that funds had been provided to maintain the Uganda occupation till the end of 1892. (1)

The trustees of the C.M.S. fund finally transferred £16,000 to the Company on 29th February 1892, followed by two smaller amounts of £375 in May 1892 and £198 in November 1893. (2) Contributions came in fairly substantial amounts from C.M.S. supporters, - the Comtesse de Noailles (who had contributed to the private Gordon relief expedition) gave a large sum, while other names on the list for amounts of between £10 and £100 were T.F. Buxton, H.M. Stanley, S. Keymer of the Manchester Geographical Society and Mountjoy Jephson. (3) It seems to have been collected by personal contact and private circularising and as a result of the appeal at the Gleaners' meeting of 30th October. Even in the case of Bishop Tucker's steamer fund, over one third of the total sum was provided by one Newcastle clergyman. (4) The remainder of the £40,000 was found by

(1) Parliamentary Papers, Vol LX11, C 6847, Uganda 1893-4, Co. to F.O. 11th November 1891.

(2) G/Y A7/1, see letters from the Company to Hutchinson, 19th January 1892, 4th February 1892.

(3) Ibid, list of contributors, Mountjoy Jephson was a member of the Emin Pasha expedition, -previously in the army, and a friend of the Comtesse de Noailles.

(4) Ibid, Fox to Hutchinson, 12th January 1892.

members of the Mackinnon family and their friends, Mackinnon himself contributing £5,000. (1)

The lack of widespread support, especially for Bishop Tucker's fund may have been partly due to some disapproval by C.M.S. supporters, of the Society's connections with the Company. A Norfolk clergyman wrote "I am deeply grieved to see the dear old ship drifting from her ancient moorings into troubled seas in which rocks and shoals abound on every side....I shall think it a gracious interposition of Providence if the extraordinary appeal for funds meets with little response." (2) There were still some missionary supporters who thought that the missionary must succeed due to his own efforts, without aid, especially military aid, from Companies or Government.

By February 1892, attention had swung to the proposed Government grant of £20,000 for a survey of the line of the Mambasa Victoria railway, which was debated in the House of Commons in March; the railway survey vote passed by 211 to 23 in a thin House, but it was doubtful if any more money would be obtained. The Company desired a

(1) Ibid, Mackinnon to Hutchinson, 18th December 1891.

(2) Ibid, W.S. Price to Hutchinson, 2nd January 1892.

guarantee of the interest on the capital which would be lent to build the railway. But when the Salisbury Ministry resigned in August 1892, the fate of Uganda was still not settled.

Early in 1892 the A.S.S. entered the agitation. Like Egypt, the Sudan, Central Africa and Nyasaland, the Uganda issue had a strong anti-slavery content. Here in the turbulent interior, diplomatic representations against the slave trade would be useless and only British occupation would eradicate the slave trade route, which, the A.S.S. were convinced, led from Uganda to the coast. The A.S.S. position was strengthened by the fact that railway building was one of the remedies suggested at the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference in 1890; the British Government was one of the signatories of the Brussels Act, which was invoked a number of times in 1892, to justify the building of the Mombasa-Victoria railway. The A.S.S. insistence on legitimate trade as an anti-slavery policy, also led them to support the Company; the profitability of trade would be an index to the decline of slavery.

But there were some differences of opinion with the Company. When in December 1889, the Company requested the

A.S.S. to contribute to purchase the freedom of some slaves the Society felt obliged to refuse, since purchase involved recognition of the legal status of slavery which against their principles. (1)

Edmund Struge the Quaker chairman resigned from the A.S.S. in protest against the Company's request, and Hutton resigned owing to A.S.S. criticism of the Company, though both resignations were withdrawn. (2)

A more important question during the Uganda agitation was whether the Company had employed slaves as porters, and whether the railway could be built without slave labour, - both questions were raised by Herace Waller.

In 1892, T.F. Buxton was the intermediary between the Company and the A.S.S. In 1891 it had been suggested that the Society might contribute to the £16,000 being raised by the A.C.M.S. though this plan never materialised. (3)

At an A.S.S. committee meeting on 2nd October 1891, Kemball, Mackenzie and Buxton were present as directors of the Company, and Bishop Tucker and Rev. Cyril Gordon as representatives

(1) A.S.S. MSS. Minute Book E2/11, minutes of meeting held 1st February 1889.

(2) Ibid, committee meeting of 1st March 1889.

(3) G4, Letters relating to Uganda, Mackinnon to Buxton 12th August 1891.

of the C.H.S. (1) A memorial was sent from this meeting to the Government against the impending abandonment of Uganda. (2)

In February 1892 the A.S.S. forwarded a circular letter to Liberal M.P.s urging them to vote for the railway survey grant. The first paragraph set the scheme in its anti-slavery context, the second stressed the commercial aspects, and the third commented on the strategic importance of Uganda at the head-waters of the Nile and of "the Imperial interests of this country." (3) With the circular went a printed copy of the 1891 memorial to Salisbury. Baroness Burdett-Coutts was helping to send out this missive. (4) Allen was trying a little moral blackmail on Liberal M.P.s. by implying that a vote against the railway was a vote in favour of slavery. The anti-slavery argument had a good deal of potential as a good many Liberals were also humanitarians. The enclosed letter in Gladstone's copy of the circular read "I am persuaded that the Society

(1) E2/11, Minutes of meeting held 2nd October 1891.

(2) Letter Book E3/7, Allen to Salisbury 2nd October 1891.

(3) Ibid, undated draft letter to M.P.s. and E2/11, minutes of meeting held 4th March 1892.

(4) Letter book E3/8, Allen to A.J. Mundella.

will receive the sympathy and co-operation of the British public which has long been accustomed to consider the Liberal Party as the stronghold of anti-slavery feeling in England." (1)

At the next committee meeting on 1st April, there was some criticism of Allen's unilateral action in sending out the circulars, which had apparently been done without the knowledge of the committee. Opposition came from Waller and A.E. Pease, and it was eventually decided to make provision for more discussion between meetings, and for setting up a sub committee to amass facts and arguments relating to the railway. (2) Waller presumably objected from an anti-Company point of view.

In the House of Commons debate, the main speakers in favour of the survey grant, Sir John Kennaway and Sir Lewis Pelly, both had a strong personal interest in the railway. The principal Liberal opponents of the grant were Labouchere and Harcourt and Allen commented sadly on the lack of Liberal support for the grant. (3)

(1) E3/2, Allen to Gladstone, 2nd March 1892.

(2) E2/11, Minutes of meeting held 1st April 1892.

(3) E3/8, letter of Allen, 18th March 1892.

With the approaching General Election, the A.S.S. again in June circularised all Parliamentary candidates with a resolution urging that the railway be built, two printed memoranda drawn up by the Company, and a letter by Mountjoy Jephson originally designed for Chambers of Commerce. It was stated that the Jephson letter had nothing to do with the A.S.S. but nothing was said as to the Company. ⁽¹⁾ But the A.S.S. resolution had developed the commercial aspects of the situation declaring that "the working classes of England have perhaps, the strongest interest in the adoption of such a policy by the British Government, inasmuch as it opens up new markets for English manufactures of unlimited extent, and with this special feature, that they will be in no danger of being met by those hostile protective taxes which now confront them in most of the colonies." ⁽²⁾ The A.S.S. was necessarily quite optimistic about trade prospects in Africa. The Society's travelling agent Frederick Banks was also giving lectures on railways and trade in

(1) E2/11, Minutes of meeting on 1st July 1892.

(2) Ibid, minutes of meeting on 3rd June 1892.

Africa, mainly to congregations at London churches, and occasionally in Bristol where there was some Quaker support for the A.S.S. (1)

Like that of the C.M.S. the pro-retention line of the A.S.S. in the first part of 1892, resulted in some opposition, - it was accused of promoting armed expeditions against the slave raiders, (2) and had to deny this in a letter to the press.

The commercial aspects of the Uganda question had been pressed on the Chambers of Commerce in February and March by Jephson, who toured the country in connection with the railway survey grant. This was not the first time that the commercial importance of Africa had been put before the Chambers, - Stanley had made a tour of the country on the subject in June 1890. (3) There were also some Chambers such as Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow, whose members had specific interest in African trade, - particularly the West African trade. Jephson's analysis was highly optimistic; he saw wide possibilities

(1) Ibid. & Anti-Slavery Reporter, January-February 1892.

(2) Anti-Slavery Reporter, July-August 1892.

(3) H. M. Stanley, Autobiography, p.422.

for trade in coffee, tea, ivory, groundnuts, palm oil, rubber, cotton and tobacco, and claimed that there was an abundance of iron ore and gold throughout Central Africa. ⁽¹⁾ In return large British exports of cotton goods, woollen goods, iron and brass articles would be exchanged. The Royal Geographical Society and the Associated Chambers of Commerce saw no reason to disagree with this prospectus when it was put before them.

Jephson had close links with the Company. A paper which he put out to the Chambers in January on trade prospects, contained a brief history of the Company, and according to a note on the back of the Foreign Office copy, was written by Mackenzie. ⁽²⁾ Resolutions were sent to the Government from Chambers at Edinburgh, Blackburn, Leeds, Birmingham and Aberdeen, - not from Manchester although Jephson spoke there. All mentioned the need for new markets in view of foreign tariffs and referred to the slave trade as a minor argument. ⁽³⁾

(1) Anti-Slavery Reporter, November-December 1891.

(2) F.O. 84/2241, Africa, Slave Trade, Domestic & Various February-March 1892. Copy of Jephson's paper.

(3) F.O. 84/2243, Africa, Slave Trade, Domestic & Various, March-April 1892, resolutions from Chambers of Commerce.

These first stages of agitation were wholly a pressure group affair. Only a limited interest was stirred up among C.M.S. supporters and commercial interests, and Uganda certainly played a very minor part in the 1892 election. The C.M.S. and A.S.S. faced the problem of not being able to support the Company, especially financially, without incurring adverse criticism and they therefore toned down their activities as much as possible.

But the money raised towards the end of 1891, had provided only a very short term solution to the problems of the Company, and on 17th May 1892 Mackinnon wrote to the Foreign Office giving notice of the Company's evacuation of Uganda by the end of 1892. He added that the Company had gone to Uganda, for national rather than for commercial reasons, in order to consolidate the British sphere in view of international rivalries in East Africa. (1) Another financial appeal was obviously impractical and of little use, and the struggle in the Autumn of 1892 revolved around persuading the new Liberal Government to either finance the Company or to take over its work in Uganda, - the latter solution became the one most favoured.

(1) Parliamentary Papers, Vol LXII, C 6847, Uganda, 1893-4, Mackinnon to the F.O. 17th May 1892.

Neither Conservatives nor Liberals were particularly eager to take on new responsibilities in Africa. The Salisbury administration had already had experience of the difficulties caused by chartered companies, in the complaints of the French Government against Lugard's treatment of the Catholic mission. But the Liberal Foreign Secretary was Lord Rosebery who was determined both to forstall French influence in Africa, and to run Foreign Policy without interference from other members of the Cabinet. Reginald Brett described his position "He is absolute at the F.O. He informs his colleagues of very little, and does as he pleases. If it offends then he retires. We shall remain in Egypt and the continuity of Lord S's policy will not be disturbed." (1) From a belief in the Empire already acquired, Rosebery had also moved to a policy of "pegging out claims for the future" as he put it in his speech of 1st March 1893 at the Colonial Institute. (2)

His strongest opponent in the Cabinet was Harcourt, the Home Secretary, who denied that there was any profitable

(1) Quoted in Robinson, Gallagher and Denny, Op cit., p.318.

(2) R.R. James, Rosebery, p.284.

trade in Uganda, or any slave raiding either for that matter and concluded "I see nothing but endless expense, trouble and disaster in prospect if we allow ourselves to drift into any sort of responsibility for this business..." (1)

Most of the other ministers were doubtful. On 29th September 1892, Rosebery won a minor victory when the Cabinet decided to subsidise the Company for a further three months. Rosebery saw this as a valuable breathing space for public feeling to develop, (2) and when Lugard returned to England at the beginning of October, Rosebery met him and probably briefed him on his retentionist campaign. (3)

The C.M.S. certainly thought that Rosebery was in favour of annexation and was awaiting some demonstration of public feeling to strengthen his hands. (4)

The main lines of the agitation in the last three

(1) Quoted in Robinson, Gallagher and Denny, Op cit, p.315.

(2) R.R. James, Op cit, p.268 for Rosebery's letter to the Queen on the compromise in the Cabinet.

(3) Ibid, p.271. See also Margery Perham, Lugard Vol 1, p.420, for Lugard's collaboration with Rosebery.

(4) G/Y A7/1, Hutchinson to Wigram, 24th September 1892.

months of 1892, were laid out in a letter to Salisbury from William Burdett-Coutts, "the missionary feeling which is very earnest in many quiet quarters, the anti-slavery appeal (which is peculiarly awkward for Mr. Gladstone), and the commercial, which affords an unfailing platform missile in manufacturing districts." (1)

Anxiety in the C.M.S. came to a head in September. Hutchinson tried to persuade Kennaway and Buxton to put pressure on members of the Government to take charge of Uganda until Parliament should meet in February 1893. (2) Kennaway was inclined to be cautious about such an approach by the C.M.S. to politics, but Buxton promised to see his cousin Sidney Buxton, a Liberal M.P. and Lord Rosebery. (3) On 13th September, as Hutchinson wrote "the Committee took the matter into their own hands. A young man asked what the Committee were going to do, and if the question might be discussed." There was a "strong feeling" in the Committee and "they decided that Sir John

(1) Salisbury MSS. Class E, General correspondence, William Burdett-Coutts to Salisbury, 3rd July 1892.

(2) C.M.S. MSS. Ordinary Letters, 1892 G.A.C. 4/10, no. 1890, Hutchinson to Wigram, 13th September 1892.

(3) Ibid.

be requested to arrange a deputation to see the Government." (1)

This deputation met Rosebery on 20th September 1892, but received a rather unsatisfactory reply to their request for Government action. However, having reason to believe that Rosebery was really on their side, they continued to seek ways of organising public opinion. Even before the deputation on 19th September Hutchinson was suggesting an Exeter Hall meeting and similar meetings all over the country. (2) A number of correspondents wrote with plans for local meetings, petitions, a special Uganda Sunday with simultaneous meetings and sermons all over the country, and an afternoon of prayer and general publicity including handbills and pamphlets. (3) Most advised a combination of prayer and memorials.

Prayer was acceptable and conventional enough, but there was some doubt as to the propriety of the Society taking part in other forms of agitation. A London clergyman had asked "Should we not ask them (our friends) to petition

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid., no. 1898, Hutchinson to Wigram, 19th September 1892.

(3) G/Y A7/1, See letter of a London clergyman, Percy Grubb to Wigram 1st October - 15th October 1892. Also Vicar of St. Stephen's Walthamstow to Wigram, 6th October 1892.

about what they pray about.." or would this verge on political action ? (1) On 20th October Wigram was writing to the Times explaining that the Society was merely making public the facts about Uganda, rather than urging the Government to annex the country. (2) The paradox of the situation was succinctly put in a C.M.S. memorandum (undated and unsigned) - "The C.M.S. must avoid anything approaching political agitation. The subject cannot be treated apart from politics." It continued that the C.M.S. should approach the A.S.S. with a view to forming a more broadly based committee of agitation. (3)

As a result of this line of reasoning, some C.M.S. delegates attended an A.S.S. committee meeting on 7th October. Though the A.S.S. were to ask for a deputation to Rosebery and the Lord Mayor was to be requisitioned to hold a meeting, the C.M.S. found the anti-slavery group luke-warm. The Rev. Baring-Gould commented "...as a Society they will not take the initiative...I fear our

(1) G/Y A7/1, Percy Grubb to Wigram 6th October 1892.

(2) The Times, 20th October 1892.

(3) G.A.C. 4/10, Note on C.M.S. notepaper.

interview was not very fruitful." (1)

The C.M.S. published some propaganda material. A handbook on Uganda was issued in mid-November entitled "Uganda, its story and its claims", and after it had been advertised in the C.M.S. periodicals, 25,000 copies were sold. (2)

A "Uganda Catechism" was compiled by the Vicar of St. James Bermondsey. (3) A manifesto drawn up by the committee on 11th October, was published in the magazines and by 15th November a Harrogate clergyman was enthusiastically requesting copies to be placed on church pews. (4)

These pamphlets usually summarised the history of the mission, with its trials and tribulations, and the main argument for retention was that the withdrawal of British influence would be followed by "war and the inevitable massacre of Christians." This was backed up by an appeal from the native Ugandan Christians, and corroborated by Lugard's own opinion. Government protection for the mission was justified on the grounds that "the old system

(1) Ibid, no.1935, Baring-Gould to Wigram 7th October 1892.

(2) Gleaner, December 1892, January 1893.

(3) G/Y A7/1, Editor of the Record to Wigram 5th October 1892.

(4) G.A.C. 4/10, no.1952, R.W. Fawkes to Wigram 15th November 1892.

has been swept away (by the actions of the Company) and with it the relations which the missionaries formerly occupied to the King and the people." (1) The slave trade was mentioned though not commerce. The arguments were thus wholly philanthropic.

The most potent means of publicity was a special Uganda Supplement inserted in the Record on 14th October 1892. The editor of the Record had suggested this to Wigram a few days before. (2) The Supplement included the Manifesto, the appeal from the native Christians, and most interesting of all a form of petition to the House of Commons; this contained all possible arguments against the abandonment of Uganda, - the results of the withdrawal of the Company were listed as peril to missionaries and converts, anarchy and bloodshed and a stimulus to the slave trade. Commerce was mentioned and also the disaster to national honour and prestige if the trusting natives were deserted.

Readers, especially C.M.S. local unions, were urged to obtain parcels of the Supplement, copy the petition, get

(1) C.M.S. General Committee Minutes, Vol 56, minutes of meeting held on 1th October 1892

(2) G/Y A7/1, Editor of Record to Wigram 5th October 1892.

signatures and forward it to the local M.P. (1) Precise instructions were given, - sheets of signatures were to be pasted together, marks were to be put if signatories could not write. The following week it was announced that the Supplement had dols out and was being reprinted. Petition forms could also be supplied from the Record office. (2)

The C.M.S. were possibly trying to avoid too close a connection with the petition, by having it printed not in one of their own periodicals but in a general Church of England magazine. The C.M.S. periodicals (nor the MSS.) do not refer to the petition. Publication in the Record had the advantage of a wide circulation, without directly implicating the C.M.S.

The Supplement appears to have prompted resolutions on Uganda. For instance at a meeting of Norfolk Church Missionary Union on 19th October, it was reported that "after quoting some stirring passages from the Supplement to the Record Mr. Bateman proposed a memorial to the Prime

(1) Record, 14th October 1892.

(2) Ibid, 21st October 1892.

Minister" (1) At the meeting of Rockland Deanery, Norwich, attention was drawn to the Supplement and a resolution was passed. (2) The petition was also used. It was, signed by the London Lay Workers C.M.S. Union it was reported that "The members had made excellent use of the forms of petition issued by the Record, and one huge petition stretched right along the table in the Committee Room." (3) A letter from Doncaster suggested that local C.M.S. secretaries and clergy should circulate it, and the writer added "Please send me a parcel of 25, together with a dozen forms of petition to begin with. I propose to get to work without delay." (4) But no petitions from Doncaster or from the Lay Workers Union, reached the Foreign Office. In all only twelve copies of the petition out of a total of 174 resolutions arrived at the Foreign Office. 11 of these came from parishes, and one from the inhabitants of Sherbourne House, Shincliffe and Belmont, near Durham, sent in by the owner of Sherbourne House with one hundred signatures. (5)

(1) Ibid, 28th October 1892.

(2) Ibid, 4th November 1892.

(3) Ibid, 18th November 1892.

(4) Ibid, 28th October 1892.

(5) F.O. 84/2192, File of resolutions on Uganda from 15th October 1892 to 21st December 1892.

The first parish petition arrived from an Irish parish of Eniskerry on 11th November, and was followed by eight more from Norfolk, after a C.M.S. meeting in Norwich at the home of Samuel Gurnoy, the local C.M.S. secretary and A.S.S. supporter. Two petitions came from Yorkshire and one from Woking. (1) There were no doubt other petitions using the Record form which did not reach the Foreign Office.

The C.M.S. also approached the Archbishop of Canterbury, asking him to speak on Uganda at the annual Church Conference at Folkstone. (2) On 4th October the Archbishop obliquely referred to Uganda, "Can we leave the subject of foreign missions without recording our emphatic prayer that, whatever the commercial exigencies, and we well know and recognise that there are difficulties that demand statesmanship as well as courage, your country's course shall be so shaped that Christian converts shall not be abandoned, (great cheering) to imminent destruction. Uganda is a land which has already drunk the blood of martyrs." (3) This speech

(1) Ibid.

(2) G.A.C. 4/10, Kennaway to Wigram, 5th October 1892.

(3) Church Times, 7th October 1892.

not the official stamp of Church of England approval on retention, and it was fortunate for the C.M.S. that the period of agitation coincided with the yearly Diocesan Conferences and Synods. These were chronologically the first to send Uganda resolutions to the Foreign Office, and it was obvious from the reception of the Archbishop's statement, that many clergymen were aware of the Uganda situation at the beginning of October. The agitation spread outwards from the C.M.S. to eventually include all levels of Church of England organisation. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the C.M.S. operated a wide organisational network spread over a large number of parishes.

In some cases the C.M.S. was directly associated with the Church of England resolutions. At the Rochester Diocesan Conference Henry Morris, an active C.M.S. member proposed the resolution, ⁽¹⁾ At Hull Rural Deanery the resolution was proposed by a member of the C.M.S. and seconded by a member of the S.P.G. ⁽²⁾ At Chichester

(1) See F.O. 84/2192.

(2) Ibid.

Diocesan Conference the resolution was proposed by Samuel Hannington, a relative of the C.M.S. missionary Bishop. In the Foreign Office file of Uganda resolutions there are eighteen resolutions from C.M.S. branches, seven from S.P.G. branches and three from other meetings of missionary supporters. The Record and Gleaner mention three additional C.M.S. resolutions.

The London C.M.S. was in close contact with supporters in the provinces. Letters were received from Bristol, - including one from a working man offering £1 to the Company,⁽¹⁾ - from Leicester, Liverpool, Portsmouth, Edinburgh, St. Leonards, Norwich, Cambridge, Birmingham, Lyme Regis and Launceston, giving information about proposed meetings and asking for speakers and literature.⁽²⁾ In Norwich, Birmingham and Cambridge the local C.M.S. organisation played some part in arranging meetings. Even after the decision of the Government to send Sir Gerald Portal to report on the Uganda situation, was made public on 23rd November, it was still thought necessary to continue the

(1) G/Y A7/1, Bristol working man to Wigram, 2nd October 1892.

(2) G.A.C. 4/10, see nos. 1960, 1973a, 2023, 2036, 2059.

agitation. At the beginning of December, after consultations with Mackinnon, a further deputation to Rosebery was considered, though the Foreign Secretary refused this request. (1)

The A.S.S. meanwhile was also working in close contact with the Company. On 9th October, Buxton was writing to Allen offering to give £50 towards the expense of any agitation the A.S.S. might take up. (2) But before receiving this letter the A.S.S. had already decided on a deputation to Rosebery, (3) and 20th October was fixed as the date for this. Buxton at once offered £20 towards the donation expenses, (4) and Allen had already accepted in advance any money he might offer, (5) which was no doubt welcome and necessary in view of the unpromising state of A.S.S. funds. But in fact it meant that the A.S.S. part in the agitation was being partly subsidised by one of the directors of the Company, though the A.S.S. were careful to avoid mention of the Company in their

(1) Ibid, no. 2075, Kennaway to Wigram, 1st December 1892.

(2) A.S.S.MSS. C53/76, Buxton to Allen 9th October 1892.

(3) E3/7, Allen to Rosebery 30th September 1892.

(4) C53/77, Buxton to Allen, 12th October 1892.

(5) E3/8, Allen to Buxton, 10th October 1892.

statements. The A.S.S. also decided to ask the Mayor to hold a public meeting; Buxton helped here as well. Together with eight other "bankers and merchants" he got up a requisition asking for a public meeting "under the auspices of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, to discuss the threatened abandonment of Uganda, on anti-slavery and humanitarian grounds, free from political or sectarian bias." (1) Allen was informed that Mackenzie would suggest people who might be invited, and would give assistance with the clerical work. (2) It was of course impossible to get up a meeting in the City of London free from political bias; a correspondent wrote concerning the requisition, "The City is so strongly Unionist that a non-political movement is difficult." (3) The meeting was never in fact held, similar purposes being achieved by two meetings held under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce and at Kensington Town Hall, where the A.S.S. was represented. (4)

(1) G4, letters relating to Uganda, Memorial to Mayor, 11th October 1892.

(2) C71/58, W.H. Wylde to Allen, 25th October 1892.

(3) G.A.C. 4/10, no. 1947, correspondent to Wigram.

(4) See The Times, 11th November 1892.

But the A.S.S. deputation was an impressive affair. Hutchinson had written to Allen suggesting names for invitations, ⁽¹⁾ but Allen wanted to minimize the clerical element as this had already been represented in the C.M.S. deputation. ⁽²⁾ Supporters of the A.S.S. in Manchester, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Liverpool and Bristol were asked to attend. One hundred and twenty people were present in addition to members of the A.S.S. committee. Buxton was the only director of the Company present, and he was also on the A.S.S. committee. The rest included Ashmead Bartlett M.P. R. Bosworth Smith, ⁽³⁾ J. Scott Keltie, ⁽⁴⁾ the secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, and a number of representatives from provincial towns. ⁽⁵⁾ Arthur Pease

(1) C60/131, Hutchinson to Allen, 18th October 1892.

(2) E3/7, Allen to Archbishop of Canterbury, 29th October 1892.

(3) Reginald Bosworth Smith, 1839-1908, was a schoolmaster at Harrow and something of an authority on Mohammedanism. He had taken an Imperial position in the Sudan issue in 1885.

(4) J. Scott Keltie, member of the R.G.S. with a special interest in Africa, author of The Partition of Africa,

(5) Anti-Slavery Reporter, September - October 1892.

the Quaker President of the A.S.S. introduced the deputation and presented a memorial stressing the obligations of the Government under the Brussels anti-slavery act, and denying that the A.S.S. was motivated by political, religious or commercial interests. (1)

But the links between slavery and commerce were not neglected in this deputation. Albert Rollit, Conservative M.P. for Islington and President of the London Chamber of Commerce spoke of the great interest expressed by the African section of the Chamber, and concluded "an extension of trade is calculated to restrain the traffic in slaves." Charles MacArthur, President of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, laid emphasis on the danger to British trade from foreign tariffs, - this would be the case in Uganda if it were taken over by a foreign power. Frank Spence, a partner in a works at Birmingham, Manchester and Goole, dependent on the export trade, reiterated that "not a square mile of the little remaining territory which can be peacefully delivered from the slave trade and from heavy

(1) Ibid.

protective duties of our competitors, should be left uncovered by the British flag." (1) Philanthropy and commerce slotted very neatly together as motives for Imperialist expansion in Uganda. Arthur Albright, a Birmingham Quaker and owner of a chemical firm, suggested a Birmingham meeting and ended "what would America say about our Imperialism if we forsook Uganda ?(hear hear!)"

The only discordant note was provided by Horace Waller, who disconcerted the rest of the deputation by stating that there was no large scale slave raiding in Uganda, and by implying that any slaves to be seen in the region were employed by the Company. (2) He was not however in favour of withdrawing from Uganda, on account of British obligations to the natives. Waller's speech resulted in another period of strain between the A.S.S. and the Company. Buxton was highly displeased, and Waller was asked to write to the President of the Society explaining his views. (3) But he did nothing to retract his opinions and in fact got a resolution passed at an A.S.S. meeting on 4th November

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

(3) E2/11, Minutes of meeting held 4th November 1892.

denouncing the hire of slaves as porters at Zanzibar, which could be interpreted as another indirect attack on the Company. (1) The matter was finally glossed over in an exchange of letters between Lord Lorne and Edmund Sturge which were published in the Times, in which Sturge acknowledged the good intentions of the Company, but wished that they had agreed to campaign for the abolition of the legal status of slavery in Zanzibar. (2) Clearly the relationship between the A.S.S. and the Company was not completely smooth and it is likely that some members of the A.S.S. committee found it difficult to reconcile the actions of a more materialist Company with their Quaker principles.

Rosebery's reply to the deputation was distinctly more favourable than his response to the C.M.S. deputation a month before. He implied that he disagreed with other members of the Cabinet over Uganda but added encouragingly, "...having put our hands to the plough...we shall not be able, even if we were willing, to turn back." (3)

The other philanthropic society, the Aborigines

(1) Ibid.

(2) The Times, 12th November 1892.

(3) R.R. James, Op cit, pps. 271-2.

Protection Society, decided to take no action in the Uganda affair, mainly because of their anti-Company line. (1)

They had attacked Stanley for his conduct in the Emin expedition, and in December 1892, R. Fox-Bourne (the secretary) together with Belfort Bax and members of the Fabian Society had signed a manifesto against the policy of opening up Africa against the will of the natives and forcing on them "in the interests of a small wing of capitalists, drink which will ruin them morally, and physically, and goods which they do not need." (2)

T.F. Buxton saw this as an attack on the I.B.E.A.Co. and resigned from the A.P.S. committee in protest. The A.P.S. had little sympathy with chartered company imperialism.

The A.S.S. action extended to those towns where they had members or contacts. For example a member of the Society Arthur Albright played the largest single role in the Birmingham agitation. Allen, on 1st November attended the annual meeting of the Birmingham Ladies Negroes Friends Society, where a local Church of England clergyman spoke on Uganda. This Birmingham anti-slavery group supported

(1) Transactions of the A.P.S. 1892.

(2) A.P.S. MSS. Rhodes House Library, Oxford, G5, The A.P.S. and the I.B.E.A.Co. Copy of manifesto.

the Company, ⁽¹⁾ and at the 1892 meeting a resolution in favour of retention was passed and plans made for a public meeting. Albright had written urging that the C.N.S. meeting on 2nd December at which Lugard was to speak, should be held as a town's meeting, ⁽²⁾ and Albright started the necessary requisition to the Mayor. ⁽³⁾ There seems to have been some Quaker disapproval of these activities, since Albright in December was defending his views in the Friend, - "I have noted...that those who take up the cause of Uganda as an important step towards the suppression of the slave trade, being Friends, are thought to be in danger of compromising their peace principles...I regret to believe that an over-strained and inopportune application of peace principles so-called, is operative to impede and stifle the anti-slave trade tendency." ⁽⁴⁾ This was one of the very few open admissions of the contradiction between A.S.S. and Quaker principles and Imperialism. People like Albright were increasingly having to choose between traditional non-violent humanitarianism and the new Imperialism of expansion by British force.

(1) Report of the Birmingham Ladies Negroes Friends Society, 1891, resolution supporting the East Africa Company.

(2) Ibid, report for 1892. & Birmingham Daily Post, 2nd Nov. 1892.

(3) Birmingham Daily Post, 11th November 1892.

(4) Friend, 30th December 1892.

The C.M.S. also played some part in the Birmingham meeting,⁽¹⁾
 and the Bishops of Worcester and Coventry were prominent.⁽²⁾
 Even in February 1893, when the agitation had died down,
 Albright was urging further action by the A.S.S.⁽³⁾

Allen also wrote to his Manchester supporters, Sidney Keymer (who had contributed towards the 1891 C.M.S. occupation fund) and the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce.

Keymer replied "There is a very strong feeling in Manchester against withdrawing from Uganda, and I am glad to be able to inform you that on Wednesday next, Mr. Hutton and I are bringing the matter before the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, when we hope to obtain from them an expression of their strong support..."⁽⁴⁾ But a Manchester resolution was only passed with difficulty after further persuasion by Lugard.

Allen was in contact with Robert Felkin in Edinburgh and George Skey of Halvern who organised two Uganda meetings in that town.⁽⁵⁾

(1) G.A.C. 4/11, no. 2010, Henry Sutton of Birmingham to Wigram, 8th November 1892.

(2) Birmingham Daily Post, 3rd December 1892.

(3) E2/11, Minutes of meeting held 3rd February 1893.

(4) G4, letters relating to Uganda, Keymer to Allen, 25th October 1892.

(5) Ibid, Felkin to Allen, 4th October 1892, Skey to Allen, 29th October 1892.

The anti-slavery argument was the one most frequently used in the Uganda resolutions sent to the Foreign Office. Anti-slavery sentiment had thus spread far beyond the confines of the small A.S.S. to percolate a wide section of the Church of England; it was frequently expressed by commercial interests. It was of course the most impeccable argument for annexation, emotive, impressive, and disinterested, and thus had a wide appeal, which could not easily be disregarded.

Thus both the C.M.S. and the A.S.S. had close links with the Company and both had tried to organise agitation, (the A.S.S. might have done more had not Allen gone on a visit to Australia in mid-November 1892). But even with all this effort the feeling worked up was confined to a small section of the British population. It has been argued in a chapter of a thesis, "The British and Uganda 1862-1900" by A. Low, ⁽¹⁾ that the agitation was largely spontaneous, nation wide and had support from all classes and sections of the population. As a result of a rather narrow selection of

(1) London Ph.D. thesis, 1956. The chapter on the 1892 agitation was published in the "Uganda Journal" March 1954, pp. 81-100.

sources, he concluded that the C.M.S. for example, played little part in the agitation, - a conclusion not borne out by a study of C.M.S. manuscripts. (1) The agitation in fact appears as predominantly a Church of England affair. The arguments for wide retentionist support must rest on an analysis, geographical and structural, of those meetings organised outside the Church of England, and these are a minority of the 174 resolutions sent to the Foreign Office. The picture remains the same if the few known resolutions not forwarded the Foreign Office are taken into account.

Out of the 174 resolutions, 17 came from the Diocesan Conferences where the initiative was often taken by the Bishops, and 23 from Rural Deaneries. Parishes sent 26 resolutions, 11 of these using the Record petition form. Parish meetings were certainly not evenly distributed throughout the country. Five were in or near Bristol and seven were in Norfolk. Only five of the total came from the North of England. There was a cluster from London and the Home Counties but only one from Ireland and none from Wales or

(1) Low assessed only the F.O. file in any detail, and did not closely examine the C.M.S. or A.S.S. papers, or take into account the few, though interesting, anti-retentionist opinions. His analysis is thus rather superficial.

Scotland where the Church of England was less important.

Apart from the 11 parishes using the Record petition which emanated from the C.M.S., two others mentioned specific missionary interests, - one referred to the C.M.S. deputation and the rector of the parish at Blaby, Leicestershire had a son in Africa. (1)

Missionary meetings sent a total of 28 resolutions, and other church meetings, including two Nonconformist churches, Presbyterian and Wesleyan Methodist, sent 10 resolutions.

Thus 104 resolutions came from specifically religious sources, almost all from Church of England organisations, and many with specifically C.M.S. influence or overtones. To this must be added the strong religious and clerical element at many of the public meetings. Discounting meetings actually called by the C.M.S. there were 23 general meetings altogether in 20 different towns. At almost half of these there was some pronounced clerical participation. The resolution from the meeting at Old Hill, Staffordshire, was forwarded by the Vicar. At Durham the Dean proposed the

(1) F.O. 84/2192, the following material unless otherwise stated, is based on the resolutions in this file, arranged in date order.

resolution and at Chester it was seconded by the Bishop. A clergyman who sent in the resolution from Tonbridge in Shropshire, reported an attendance of "Christian people of all denominations." The Bishop of Ripon sent the Leeds resolution, and at Norwich the Bishop presided at one of the meetings. At Bristol the clergy played an important part, while Church participation at Birmingham has already been noted. A local clergyman presided at the Kensington Town Hall meeting.

The Record mentions two extra meetings, - one at Lyme Regis where the gathering was organised by the Bishop of Salisbury, and one at Reading where the chief speaker was a local vicar. (1)

Of the meetings, only 4 took place in the north of England, - at Leeds, Chester, Durham and one described as consisting of "Sunderland ratepayers". There were no meetings in Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, York or any of the Lancashire industrial towns (with the exception of those organised by distinct groups such as Chambers of Commerce). There are indications that some attempts to whip up

(1) Record, 9th December 1892.

support for meetings which may have failed, due to apathy or opposition. The C.M.S. received letters from supporters in Portsmouth and St. Leonards on Sea who were interested in getting up meetings, ⁽¹⁾ but these do not seem to have occurred. A member of a Liverpool shipping firm offered to pay the expenses of a C.M.S. deputation to that town to speak on Uganda, ⁽²⁾ but there was no Liverpool public meeting, though the Chamber of Commerce was interested.

The most important London meeting took place at Kensington Town Hall on 10th November where the chief speakers were Lugard and R. Bosworth Smith. Also present were Lorne, Richard Temple and Algeron Borthwick, (the latter two were well known for their Imperialist views). ⁽³⁾

The Cambridge meeting on 25th November was primarily a University affair, with "a large proportion of the heads of Colleges and Professors, as well as other graduates of the University," in attendance. ⁽⁴⁾ The resolution was

(1) G.A.C. 4/10/11, nos. 1974, 2023.

(2) Ibid., no. 1973a.

(3) The Times, 11th November 1892.

(4) See F.O. 84/2192.

forwarded by the Vice-Chancellor, and the speakers were Lugard, Bosworth Smith and Professor Jebb M.P. for the University. Cambridge was a fertile field for missionary propaganda, - from 1881 to 1894, out of 170 graduates who became C.M.S. missionaries, 100 were from Cambridge. (1) Twenty missionaries from Cambridge sent a telegram of approval to the Birmingham Uganda meeting. (2)

In the Foreign Office file there are two resolutions from Bristol meetings, but the second seems to have come from an unspectacular suburban gathering, not reported in the Bristol press. The first on 8th November was a town's meeting, convened after a requisition to the Mayor from a mainly clerical deputation. (3) The meeting was held in the afternoon, chaired by the deputy Mayor, with the resolution proposed by the Sheriff and seconded by the Dean. There was some opposition on account of the unsuitable time of the meeting and its unrepresentative character. A Mr. Hulin said "The great bulk of the citizens were engaged in various employments at that time

(1) E. Stock, Op cit, p.351.

(2) Birmingham Daily Post, 1st December 1892.

(3) Western Daily Press, 4th November 1892.

and that meeting instead of being a bona fide representation of Bristol citizens, would be a middle class demonstration," and he put an amendment to postpone the meeting until the evening. This was seconded by a Mr. Dawling who added "This was mainly a clique of clergymen...He came as a representative of the working men of Bristol (laughter) and was proud of being one." However the amendment got only five votes and there were only three votes against the original resolution. Some speakers claimed that working men supported retention, but were not willing to test this assumption by holding an evening meeting. ⁽¹⁾ The Bristol meeting was certainly not representative of any except the clergy and middle class, and it seems that here there was some working class opposition to a Uganda protectorate. This is more significant in view of the fact that 12 of the 174 resolutions came from Bristol or its environs, but cannot be regarded as representative of public opinion there.

Norwich was a town with a strong C.M.S. element. Two public meetings were held here in the afternoon and evening of 12th December, both addressed by Lugard. The

(1) Ibid, 9th November 1892.

Norwich activity is not surprising since it was the home of the Buxton family, four of whose members were present at the meetings. Concern was first aroused by Rev. Edward Lombe of Swanton Morley, who was in communication with the C.M.S. (1) and who wrote to the Norwich Mercury on 2nd November on the "bitter cry of Uganda," calling for a public meeting. (2) The Mayor presided at the evening meeting where the resolution passed with six dissentients, (3) and the Bishop presided in the afternoon.

A meeting at Leeds Town Hall on 14th November was one of the few which claimed an non political partisan character. (4) It was asserted that Liberals and Nonconformists took part in it, and indeed Talbot Baines the editor of the Leeds Mercury the local Liberal paper, was on the platform. Uganda was given more space in the Leeds Mercury than in most of the provincial press. Liberals played little part in the agitation as a whole. Resolutions tended to come from towns such as Cheltenham, Leamington Spa, Lyme Regis, Malvern, Portsmouth and Southampton, whose middle

(1) G.A.C. 4/11, no.2036, Lombe to Wigram 17th November 1892.

(2) Norwich Mercury, 22nd November 1892.

(3) Norfolk Chronicle and Norwich Gazette, 17th December 1892.

(4) Leeds Mercury, 15th November 1892. See also resolution in F.O. 84/2192.

class and army and naval officer population can well be imagined. Only in Leeds was any working class support claimed for retention.

In most cases, speakers and promoters of meeting had a specific interest in African or Imperial affairs. In Malvern two meetings were organised by members of the Geographical Society. At Tunbridge Wells Canon Hoare a former African missionary spoke. ⁽¹⁾ At Reading the resolution was proposed by the brother-in-law of Captain Speke the African explorer, and seconded by an Archdeacon of the Zanzibar mission. ⁽²⁾

There was a hard core of Conservative M.Ps. who took part in the agitation. They included predictably Sir John Kennaway, the Imperialist brothers William Burdett-Coutts and Ashmead Bartlett, and Sir Richard Temple, and also Stanley Leighton ⁽³⁾ who sent in two resolutions from Oswestry, James Gardner who forwarded the Cheltenham resolutions, Sir Stafford Northcote who sent in the Exeter

(1) Record, 25th November 1892.

(2) Ibid, 9th December 1892.

(3) Stanley Leighton, 1837-1901, M.P. for Oswestry, was a strong Churchman and represented the Diocese of Lichfield in the House of Laymen.

Chamber of Commerce resolution and Henry Bowles who collected signatures for a petition in New Southgate. In many cases the local power structure lent authority to the proceedings, - the Mayor would be prevailed upon for example to hold a town meeting.

Only one Liberal resolution arrived at the Foreign Office, from the City Liberal Club, where it had been debated on 15th November. A resolution in favour of retention was proposed by Albert Spicer M.P. for Monmouth Boroughs and seconded by Sir John Glover. The chairman of the meeting spoke in favour of the resolution but E.H. Bayley M.P. for Camberwell, while agreeing that Uganda should be kept as a sphere of influence, said "as the representative of a working class constituency, he would not vote 1d of the ratepayers money for the construction of a railway from the coast to the interior...He wanted to see the suppression of the slave trade, but the East Africa Company had admittedly employed slaves, and if the railway were made it would have to be made by slave labour." A.C. Morton M.P. for Peterborough, guessed, more accurately than he probably realised that the Company "had been behind all the meetings which had been held in favour of the retention of Uganda.

He thought the Government should do something for the distressed people at home, before spending a lot of money on a country like Uganda." He moved the previous question, but this was lost by a narrow majority of 40 votes to 34. T.F. Buxton very cautiously defended the Company but in the end a watered down amendment, hoping that the Government would fulfill all binding pledges was passed with 12 dissentients. ⁽¹⁾ This was scarcely a victory for the retentionists although some Liberals were wavering over Uganda. On the other hand Some of the Liberal anti-Imperialists were beginning to criticise the philanthropist Imperialists on their own ground, usually by accusing them of hypocrisy.

There were only five resolutions from Conservative Parties and organisations, two from Worcester, one from Lancashire, one from Southampton and one from a branch of the Primrose League.

Eleven Town Councils sent resolutions. The first to act was Swansea on the same day as Lugard addressed the Corporation on the trade prospects of Africa. The Swansea resolution was forwarded to all other United Kingdom Town

(1) Star, 16th November 1892, for a full report of this debate.

Councils, and all but two of the eleven, - Darwen and Linlithgow, - used this form. A rather small proportion of the total British Town Councils responded to the Swansea circular. Three of those that did were in Wales, - Newport, Monmouthshire and Haverfordwest, and might have been impressed by the Swansea appeal because of geographical contiguity. It is possible that Lyme Regis and Honiton could have been influenced by Kennaway, the M.P. for the region who lived nearby at Ottery St. Mary. Three more were in the south-east of England, at Dover, where the Imperialist George Wyndham was M.P., Maidenhead and Saffron Waldon.

A further factor in the working up of the agitation was Lugard's tour of England and Scotland to address a series of meetings on Uganda. He was recalled by the Company in August to help stir up the agitation. (1) He was an ideal figure for this sort of work, armed with first hand knowledge of the situation and surrounded by the romantic aura of the African soldier and explorer. He was in great demand as a speaker. Immediately after returning

(1) Lugard MSS. S45/12, Company to Lugard 12th August 1892.

to England, he launched his campaign with two long letters to the Times on 8th and 17th October in which he gave a comprehensive survey of the Uganda question under the headings, commercial, political and philanthropic. Mackenzie advised him on the content of his letters and suggested that the organisational work connected with Lugard's tour should be done at the Company's office. ⁽¹⁾ The Company tried to keep this connection as obscure as possible, Arthur Kemball wrote to a member of the Conservative Club "The directors of the Company have resolved to abstain from taking any part in the agitation in progress," and could not identify themselves with Lugard's meetings. ⁽²⁾ Lugard also had interviews with officials of the C.M.S. and A.S.S. ⁽³⁾

From 3rd November to 12th December he spoke at 21 meetings in 11 different towns. He began in London on 3rd November with an address to the Royal Geographical Society on his East African travels. ⁽⁴⁾ Mackenzie, Kirk and other directors of the Company were present. He also addressed

(1) S54/29 & S54/31, Mackenzie to Lugard.

(2) S69/93, Kemball to Captain Dugmore 12th November 1892.

(3) G.A.C. 4/10, no. 1932, Kennaway to Wigram, 5th October 1892.
E3/8, Allen to Buxton, 10th October 1892.

(4) Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, December 1892.

the four Scottish branches of the Scottish Geographical Society at Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen, appealing to the Scottish interest in Africa and to the Livingstone tradition. (1)

He spoke at public meetings at Kensington Town Hall, Cambridge, Birmingham and Norwich, and also at the London Constitutional Club on 7th December. His most important addresses were to Chambers of Commerce. Twenty-four resolutions from Chambers of Commerce arrived at the Foreign Office, from twenty two separate Chambers, and two more are mentioned in the Chamber of Commerce Journal. (2) Lugard spoke to seven of these Chambers. Five had already sent resolutions earlier in the year after Jephson's tour, and three used the Swansea Town Council format which was circulated to all Chambers by the Newport Chamber of Commerce. There was also a resolution from Leith Chamber circulating. The Chambers had been fully alerted about East Africa, Counting Stanley's tour in 1890, some of them had been addressed three times in two and a half years on African trade.

(1) Scottish Geographical Magazine, December 1892.

(2) Chamber of Commerce Journal, November 1892-January 1893.

The economic arguments for the retention of Uganda were put by Stanley in his Swansea speech, when he said, "There is not a labourer or cottage resident in all South Wales, who ought not to be eagerly interested in the promotion of the Mombasa and Victoria Nyanza railway. For your great industries, your iron and steel foundations, your coal mines and your tin works are, as you all know, not in as flourishing a condition as you would wish them to be." He suggested that all these products would find a ready market in tariff free East Africa. ⁽¹⁾ African trade was held out as a remedy for depression at home. Investment was not mentioned in the resolutions, but always the possibilities of new markets for British goods.

One of Lugard's main meetings was at the London Chamber of Commerce. ⁽²⁾ But he was not so successful at Manchester where he spoke at the Chamber of Commerce and at a Town Hall meeting on the same day. In spite of pressure from James Hutton, the Chamber had refused to recommend a Government guarantee of interest on the capital

(1) The Times, 4th October 1892.

(2) Ibid, 7th November 1892.

needed for the Uganda railway, ⁽¹⁾ and no resolution in favour of retention of Uganda was passed until a week after Lugard's visit. ⁽²⁾ At the Town Hall meeting, at which the Mayor presided and the Bishop of Manchester spoke, he met with some opposition, "Mr. T.R. Wilkinson, a local banker, amid loud cries of "question" said that the Government should not be forced to take action against its own proper judgement. He characterized the Bishop's remarks as imprudent. Everyone who felt so deeply interested in those railways should take shares in the Company." No resolution appears to have been proposed at this meeting. ⁽³⁾ The Manchester Guardian was not convinced by Lugard's line of argument, the editorial said "We are..distrustful of the consuming capacities of the human beings of whom large numbers are always naked, whose land over great areas is "untouched by the hoe" and whose commercial longings as he explained to the London Chamber of Commerce the other day, appear to be chiefly for white donkeys, opera glasses and rat traps." ⁽⁴⁾

(1) Manchester Chamber of Commerce Monthly Record, January 1892.

(2) Ibid, November 1892.

(3) The Times, 8th November 1892.

(4) Manchester Guardian, 8th November 1892.

Nor was Lugard especially successful in the north-east. On 28th November he spoke to the Newcastle and Gateshead Chamber of Commerce, but no resolution was passed, ⁽¹⁾ and even after receiving the specimen resolution from Newport in December, "it was determined to delay taking action in the matter." ⁽²⁾ But the Stockton-on-Tees and Middlesbrough Chambers sent resolutions after hearing Lugard.

Lugard was not therefor uniformly successful in stirring up agitation among commercial interests. He usually stressed the immediate possibilities in trade, mentioning hides, ivory, rubber and coffee as the main East African products. The Economist was very sceptical about trade and critical of the Company, and even the Birmingham Post which supported retention declared that Uganda's potential as a market would only be realised in the distant future. ⁽³⁾

The economic argument was not by any means predominant in the resolutions sent to the Foreign Office. These gave the greatest emphasis to slavery, the danger to missionaries

(1) Newcastle Daily Chronicle, 29th November 1892.

(2) Chamber of Commerce Journal, January 1893.

(3) Birmingham Daily Post, 17th November 1892.

and converts, and the anarchy and bloodshed which it was expected would follow withdrawal. The aims of the Company itself were a complicated mixture of profit making, expansionism and the spread of British culture and civilization. And in any case the Uganda issue was presented to the public in a philanthropic light; the public response therefore was made on largely philanthropic grounds. Propaganda for retention stressed the non-commercial aspects of the question. For instance Bosworth Smith in his letters to the Times wrote "The good faith and honour of England is a matter which comes prior to its commerce..." The main argument against evacuation was that "...tens of thousands of the inhabitants of Uganda will be put to death the moment we retire..." Commerce had little to do with his view of the Empire, - "We are an Empire chiefly because we cannot help it. It is the expansive energies of the English nation... which has built up slowly the huge fabric of our Empire." (1)

The Acting Secretary of the Company, E. L. Bentley, published a pamphlet listing the pros and cons of retention

(1) R. Bosworth Smith, Two letters to the Times, pamphlet, London 1892.

the former of course much more numerous than the latter, and mentioning commerce only as one among several points. (1) Equally important were danger to the missionaries, the slave trade, the patriotic and Imperial aims of the Company, and the loss of face which would result if Britain deserted the native Ugandans.

A good deal was made of the fact that the Ugandan natives thought that the Company was the agent of the British Government and that a withdrawal by the Company would be regarded as tantamount to Britain breaking her word to the trusting Africans. Very important in this context was the letter which Mwanga, the King of Uganda, had been persuaded to write to Queen Victoria, - "Thank you exceedingly for sending the representatives of the Company in order to set my country to rights...Now I earnestly beseech you to help me; do not recall the Company from my country...should you recall these agents of the Company...my country is sure to be ruined; was is sure to come." (2)

(1) E.L.Bentley, Handbook to the Uganda Question and proposed East Africa Railway, London 1892.

(2) Parliamentary Papers, Vol LX11, C6847, Uganda 1893-4, Company to Foreign Office, 5th October 1892, forwarding a copy of Mwanga's letter.

The official propaganda paid some attention to the argument that if another power seized Uganda the headwaters of the Nile and the British position in Egypt would be endangered. (1) But little attention was given in the resolutions to political considerations of this kind. But it was precisely the place of Uganda in the context of the European balance of power struggle which finally persuaded the Cabinet to move towards retention. The official and unofficial minds of Imperialism were thus widely divergent on this issue.

The Government does not seem to have been much influenced by the agitation, since the decision to send Portal as Commissioner to Uganda to report on the best way of dealing with the situation, was taken on 7th November, before the agitation had really got underway. Portal was known to be in favour of retention so that abandonment of Uganda was highly unlikely once the decision to send him had been taken. Rosebery did not bring Portal's report before the Cabinet till December 1893, and Uganda was not formally annexed till April 1894.

(1) E.L. Bentley, Op cit.

The Company certainly tried to persuade the Government that the overwhelming majority of opinion in the country was in favour of keeping Uganda. In November Mackenzie left a pamphlet at the Foreign Office containing press cuttings, and explaining, "that the vast preponderance of opinion in favour of retention was not owing to any bias in the selection, but to the small number of opinions expressed on the other side." (1) It is true that there was little actual press opposition, except from the Manchester Guardian, the Daily News and working class papers such as the Reynolds News. Even the radical Star, succumbed to the humanitarian pressure and was prepared to accord Uganda a special position not to be confused with other Imperialist excursions. (2) It stated that retention was not a jingoist view but "a view entertained by many of the strongest peace advocates and supporters of the policy of non-intervention." (3) It took a very strong-minded anti-Imperialist apparently, to refute the

(1) F.O. 84/2263, Africa, Slave Trade, Domestic and Various, 1st-17th November 1892.

(2) Star, 4th November 1892.

(3) Ibid., 24th November 1892.

claims of the anti-slavery and missionary lobbies, with their appeal to high-minded sentiment.

But only the Times really contained a substantial amount of information and editorials on the subject of Uganda. The Foreign Office file 2/61, containing press cuttings on Uganda, is heavily weighted in favour of the Times and the London press in general. There was not the same interest displayed by the local press, even in those towns such as Norwich and Bristol which were noted for their public meetings. Uganda was mentioned in editorials only briefly and intermittently. ⁽¹⁾ The only general activities to be reported were the A.S.S. and C.M.S. deputations and a few of Lugard's meetings. The resolutions passed by religious bodies, - the bulk of the activity, - rarely got mentioned in the press. In spite of the gleeful assertions of the Company and the C.M.S. that public feeling was intense, there were probably many casual readers of the provincial press who did not realise that anything very much out of the ordinary was happening in Uganda.

(1) Cf. the great attention given by the press to the Sudan campaign of 1884-5, - especially after the death of Gordon; and the immense amount of publicity obtained by the Transvaal issue before the outbreak of the Boer War. No newspaper reader in August-October 1899, could have failed to be aware that momentous events were taking place in British-Boer relations. There was nothing like the same sense of urgency conveyed by the press in 1892 over Uganda.

Only the Times gave a really prominent place to Uganda, with letters from Lugard, Bosworth Smith, H.M. Stanley, Lord Brassey, Lord Lorne and Arthur Silva White the secretary of the Scottish Geographical Society. (1)

There were some suggestions, - reminiscent of the spirit behind the Gordon rescue plans of 1884, - for solving the problem by private enterprise. For example "A.T.T.P." aged eighty, who had spent much of his life in the East, suggested that two or three cotton lords or ironmasters might subscribe a further £40,000 for the Company. (2)

There was a J.B. Tirling, whose son was trying to form a "Uganda Young England Relief Company," in which two hundred thousand young people would be induced to subscribe five shillings per year. (3)

The lack of press information on Uganda helps to explain the absence of any organised counter-agitation. But the most common attitude to Uganda appears to have been apathy. The retentionist agitation only included a small

(1) The Times, 11th, 12th, 18th, 24th October 1892.

(2) Ibid, 4th October 1892.

(3) C.H.S. MSS. G.A.C. 4/10, no. 1949.

section of the population, and the resolutions were not distributed evenly in a geographical sense.

The bulk of resolutions came from the south of England. There were only seven from Wales, five from Ireland and thirteen from Scotland, - one eighth of the total. Scotland might have been expected to act as something of a centre for the agitation. Scotsmen were prominent in the Company and the Scottish Geographical Society and Scottish Churches had special interests in Africa. Alexander Low Bruce, a director of the Company who dies in 1893, was a prototype of the Scot whose life revolved around African enterprise. He was a son-in-law of Livingstone, a leader of the Scottish Liberal Unionists, "a strong Imperialist and had great belief in the extension of the British power." (1) He was associated with the I.B.E.A.Co, the African Lakes Company and the South Africa Company. He helped to inaugurate the Scottish Geographical Society and became its treasurer. But although Mackinnon found "...on all hands in Scotland that the people are in real earnest in this matter and will not hesitate to reject the

(1) Scottish Geographical Magazine, January 1894, Bruce's obituary.

Gladstonian party if they persist in their original attitude towards Uganda," (1) yet the only resolutions from Scotland were from Churches and Chambers of Commerce, - not from public meetings.

Those resolutions which came from the north of England were almost all from the north-east and Yorkshire with very few from Lancashire. On the other hand another eighth of the resolutions came from the counties in the south-west of England. Norfolk sent ten resolutions of the total 174, and Bristol and district another twelve. The incidence of the resolutions correlated roughly with the areas of C.M.S. support, - with the exception of Lancashire; from 1880 to 1898, those counties which gave the C.M.S. the most financial support were Middlesex, Yorkshire, Surrey, Lancashire, Kent, Hampshire, Sussex, and in the second range, Gloucester, Norfolk and Somerset.⁽²⁾ A cluster of resolutions came from the Home Counties and south coast. In a more general way the resolutions came from the areas where the Church of England was important.

(1) Salisbury MSS. Class E. General correspondence, Mackinnon to Salisbury.

(2) E. Stock, Op cit, p.59,211.

Resolutions did not come from the most highly industrialised or urbanised parts of the country, and certainly not from areas where there was a large working class population, but from the middle class regions, the smaller towns, coastal resorts, rural parishes and home counties suburbs. The agitation where it existed was very much a comfortable middle class affair.

It was significant however that there was little opposition to retention from Liberals or Radicals. Parliament was adjourned during the agitation. Wilfred Lawson was almost the only M.P. to speak out in the country against the retention of Uganda, which he described as a repetition of the "wicked antics" employed in the Sudan.⁽¹⁾ At Wigton Liberal Club on 24th November, he was cheered when he opposed retention "although it might be advocated by the Bishops with all the eloquence among them, although it might be hailed with acclamation in the music halls, and although it might be written up with sophistry by able editors of newspapers."⁽²⁾ It is notable that Lawson,

(1) The Times, 15th November 1892.

(2) Ibid, 25th November 1892.

nevertheless, thought that opinion was unanimous in favour of retention. (1)

Another Liberal attack on the Imperialists was made by Charles Dilke (2) in the February 1893 issue of the Fortnightly Review. He declared that commercial benefits would not compensate for money spent in building the railway and fighting the Arabs, denied that there was much slave raiding in Uganda, and inveighed against military protection for missionaries. Thus Dilke, who had favoured the invasion of Egypt in 1882, and whose works were regarded as a statement of colonial Imperialism, was in fact opposed to the expansion of British control in Africa. Like Lawson he thought that the press was almost unanimous of retention, and "the only literature which any one has had the chance of reading has been in favour of the forward policy. There exists no other." But he also pointed out that the audiences at Uganda meetings were largely middle class, and concluded that while an

(1) Ibid.

(2) Dilke after the Crawford divorce scandal in 1884-5, lost his chance to become a member of the Liberal Cabinet. In 1892 he was returned as the M.P. for Forest of Dean.

active minority were in favour of annexation, the bulk of the population were neutral or had no fixed opinion.

Although Uganda was avoided as a subject for discussion at local Liberal meetings, it appears that by no means all Liberals approved of retention, - a Liberal at Birmingham Parliamentary Debating Society for instance said on Uganda - "He deprecated interference with missionary squabbles in Uganda, of deference to the agitation carried on by semi-religious bodies at home." (1)

The Nonconformist press was very reticent on the subject. The British Weekly, the Baptist and the Nonconformist and Independent, began by taking an unsympathetic attitude to the C.M.S. request for protection. It was felt that this would not have been the policy of Livingstone or Moffat, or the attitude of the Nonconformist London Missionary Society. (2) Possibly some of the traditional dislike of the Church of England was showing here. As time went on, however, this original opposition broke down, as the dangers of massacre, betrayal of native

(1) Quoted in Daily Gazette, 23rd January 1893.

(2) See British Weekly, 6th October 1892, Baptist 7th October 1892, & Nonconformist & Independent, 30th September 1892.

converts and the threatened relapse of Uganda into barbarism, began to assume more importance. The humanitarian arguments for retention were hard to resist, sordid commercial arguments were in the background and in the chaos of Uganda there was no question of a people struggling to be free, as in the Sudan. On 10th November, Lord Salisbury put the Imperialist case before the Unionist Nonconformists, but since most Nonconformists were confirmed Gladstonians, this probably carried little weight. More important was the emergence of the Rev. Wardlaw Thompson of the L.M.S. as a supporter of retention; he asserted that Uganda was a special case and that the interests of civilization could not be relinquished, while still maintaining "...the missionary goes out with his life in his hands and it has always been our principle that he is not to go wrapt in the British flag, or expecting the protection of Great Britain wherever he goes..." (1)

The Universities Mission to Central Africa had already come out in favour of Government protection for the C.M.S. (2)

(1) Nonconformist and Independent, 18th November 1892.

(2) A.S.S.MSS. J 54, press cuttings on Uganda, extract from the Standard, 6th October 1892.

But the Nonconformist press showed no enthusiasm for retention, and for the most part preserved a judicious silence. No resolutions were reported from local dissenting bodies, and the general attitude seems to have been one of cautious neutrality. The only opposition to Imperialist expansion in Uganda, from Nonconformists was provided by the Congregationalist J.G. Rogers in an article in Nineteenth Century.⁽¹⁾ He considered that annexation would be fatal to the spirit of missionary enterprise, that there was no trade worth having in Uganda, and followed Horace Waller in stating that the railway would have to be constructed by slaves. He also developed a more general opposition to the new Imperialist expansion, on the grounds that Empire threatened both social reform at home and British Liberal democracy, by the creation of an authoritarian governing class.

The Quaker periodical the Friend scarcely mentioned Uganda, apart from endorsing the plan of Francis William Fox, of Sudan fame, for sending two government officials to devise a peaceful solution.⁽²⁾

(1) February 1893, pps. 219-234.

(2) Friend, 4th November 1892.

Catholic interests in Britain were affected by the struggle between the French and English missionaries, - the desire to have protection in Uganda conflicted with fear of Protestant domination. When the Duke of Norfolk requested the Foreign Office for information he did not get much satisfaction. The Foreign Office had since early 1892 been in diplomatic difficulties with the French Government over the safety of the French mission in Uganda, and dismissed the Duke's request with a terse comment, "This is a specious letter which under the guise of impartiality is fishing for material." (1)

Even the International Arbitration and Peace Association, usually very anti-Imperialist, took an ambiguous attitude over Uganda. The first line of opposition to retention, (2) was modified in December by Hodgson Pratt, a leading figure in the Society. He tentatively approved of the Portal mission on slave trade and missionary grounds, and because direct Imperial rule was preferable to Company rule. (3) The same issue of Concord stated

(1) F.O. 84/2263, op cit, Duke of Norfolk to F.O. 11th November 1892, note on back of letter.

(2) See Concord, November & December 1892.

(3) Ibid, December 1892. Contrast this with Dilke's view that Chartered Companies, so long as they kept out of trouble were a cheap and necessary expedient in Africa.

however that the Executive Committee were not responsible for the opinions in the article and a rejoinder was made by "Caleus" stating that wage labour as it was practised in India was equally pernicious as slavery; he summed up the curious situation of support for retention which existed, - "men who have all their lives been opposing a policy of aggression and annexation, supporting the retention of Uganda," (1)

The Reynolds Newspaper in October tried to encourage an opposition movement, "There must be plain speaking from the democratic party as to this question of the retention of Uganda," it urged, "The working classes have not derived and will not derive, one single penny of solid permanent advantage from these annexations." (2) But Justice by the beginning of December was bemoaning the apathy of the working classes in regard to jingo policies. (3) Although no organised anti-Imperialist activity emerged, it is unlikely that the working classes gave any support to the agitation. Working men were not at all common at Rural

(1) Ibid, January 1893.

(2) Reynolds Newspaper, 16th October 1892.

(3) Justice, 3rd December 1892.

Deanery meetings or other Church of England meetings, ⁽¹⁾
 most public meetings seem to have been mainly middle class
 in composition and resolutions came from the more middle
 class parts of England.

But opposition was fragmentated, and there was no
 coherent lead from the Radicals till Parliament re-assembled
 in February 1893. On 20th March Labouchere proposed that
 the vote of supply should be reduced by £5,000, - the cost
 of the Portal expedition. ⁽²⁾ The debate revolved around
 whether the Commission would result in annexation, though
 the retentionists had few doubts on this point, and what
 obligations in law, if any, the Government had to Uganda.
 Labouchere poured scorn on the notions that Uganda would
 absorb British surplus manufactures, that the slave trade
 could be abolished and that the natives were pining to
 become Christians. Gladstone made an involved defence
 of the expedition. Speakers in favour of annexation were
 George Wyndham, Abel Smith, Conservative M.P. for East
 Hertfordshire, who defended the C.M.S., Jebb of Cambridge and
 Chamberlain who linked Imperialism with social reform,

(1) See letter in Church Times November 1892.

(2) Hansard, 4th series, Vol X, 1893, pps.539-605.

stating that were it not for Imperialist expansion abroad, the British at home could not expect a livelihood at all.

Opposed to annexation was E. Storey, Liberal M.P. for Sunderland, who was against spending money in Africa while the poor at home were unprovided for. He did not wish to jettison the existing Empire, but was not prepared to extend it. Likewise Robert T. Reid, M.P. for Dumfries, did not wish to see the Empire extended, unless with prudence and common sense. But not all Liberals took this view. H.W. Paul, M.P. for one of the Edinburgh divisions, thought that the Government had a duty to protect the missionaries, and The M.P. for Leicester announced that he could not join in a vote of censure against a Liberal administration. Only forty-six M.Ps. voted for Labouchere's motion, with three hundred and sixty-eight against.

After the annexation of Uganda in 1894, the question was again raised in the House of Commons. In June the Government announced that a sum of £50,000 would be allocated to the development of Uganda. Edward Grey, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs explained the Government's attitude which, he said had not been motivated by the desire for a forward policy

in Africa "but solely from the view which they took of the situation which they found had been created in Uganda and in that part of Africa, by circumstances that had occurred before they came into office." (1) Similar arguments had been used by the Liberals in reference to Egypt in 1882. Grey, however supported both the interests of commerce and those of the Missions. He tried to deal with the argument that expenditure abroad meant less money to be spent on working class reforms at home, by claiming "The interests of the working class of this country depend greatly upon wide and far-reaching measures..."

Annexation and expenditure was opposed by Dilke, who foresaw the acquisition of more territory for the Cape-Cairo route, and asserted that the natives in Africa were ill-treated by the white man. He was confident that the Nonconformists were against the new Imperialism "I would appeal upon this question without hesitation to any Nonconformist congregation in this country, as I have appealed upon it to the almost unanimously Nonconformist parishes in my own constituency. They have the true

(1) Hansard, 4th series, Vol XXV, 31st May -21st June 1894.
Col 181 et seq.

missionary spirit...against reliance on the secular arm." (1)

He referred though, to the small number of Liberals opposed to a forward policy, and defined his own position in relation to Imperialism, "I am not one of those who are against all extension of our boundaries, although I attach more importance to our possession of adequate force to face our responsibilities, and think our responsibility in India, - India to begin with, - about enough for one Power." (2)

Opposition to annexations in Central/East Africa were not incompatible with the older varieties of Imperialism.

Likewise Labouchere argued that expansion of the Empire did not lead to the increasing strength of the Empire. (3) Together with Lawson and Storey he discounted commerce and dismissed concern over the slave trade as hypocrisy on the part of traders who wanted to make a profit. Lawson summed up "Formerly we stole Africans from Africa, and now we steal Africa from Africans." (4) But the Quaker Liberal M.P. J.A. Pease, supported annexation on slave trade grounds, and James Bryce argued for retention. In the division

(1) Ibid, col 201.

(2) Ibid, col 206.

(3) Ibid, col 212 et seq.

(4) Ibid, col 243.

there were only fifty-two votes against the Government, with two hundred and eighteen in favour.

No doubt some Liberals were disinclined to vote against their own Party for fear that this would weaken the Government. But there had been much more Liberal opposition to a Liberal Government in 1885, over the war in the Sudan. But Uganda seems to have been something of a turning point for the Liberal attitude to Imperialism. W.S. Blunt wrote "the question of evacuating or retaining Uganda was one of critical importance with the Liberal Party, for it involved the whole question of extending or limiting British Imperial responsibilities in Africa." (1) The Liberal failed to rise to the challenge of the Imperialists, and if they were not enthusiastic for retention they did nothing to mount a counter-agitation in the country. The Liberal Government had shown that on Imperial matters, its policy differed little in practice from that of the Conservatives, - continuity of Foreign Policy had been achieved. The Uganda experience enabled retentionists like Arthur Silva White of the Scottish Geographical Society to claim, - "This is not a party

(1) W.S. Blunt, My Diaries, op cit, p.100.

question; it is a national issue, for which both parties in Parliament are responsible, and in the treatment of which, the continuity of our Imperial policy is involved," (1) In the same way Randolph Churchill in the 1894 Commons debate could say "The extension of the Empire was not the work of any particular Party, but the expression of an inward force and tendency on the part of the British people to extend the boundaries of their Empire." (2) This view implied that there was little opposition left to Imperialism, and also that the Empire, irrespective of the foibles of political parties had reached a stage where it continued to increase almost of its own volition.

There are a number of reasons why the anti-Imperialists failed to act of this occasion. They may have been taken off guard by the humanitarian arguments used for retention, which were not easy to refute. There was no Parliamentary lead given by the Radicals during the October-December agitation. There was also a lack of information in the local press. The Government had made no sudden dramatic decision in favour of annexation around which opposition

(1) Nineteenth Century, July 1894, pps.23-27, Arthur Silva White, "The Partition of Africa."

(2) Hansard, Op cit, col 211.

could crystallise. By the time Uganda was annexed in 1894, there had been a considerable interim period, during which a number of Liberals, no doubt, became accustomed to the idea. But even then the silence of the anti-Imperialists especially the Nonconformists is not wholly explained away. It seems likely that Uganda marks one stage in the decline of the anti-Imperialism which had been so noticeable in 1885. Anti-Imperialism seems to have been losing ground, a suggestion which becomes more explicable in the light of the non-opposition to Imperialism in the Fashoda incident of 1898. (1)

There are two important features of the 1892 agitation, - firstly the pressure groups though well-organised and armed with impeccable arguments, did not succeed in mobilising more than a small section of the population for retention. The agitation was never really popular or widely diffused and the mass of the population remained uninterested. Secondly, the anti-Imperialist and Liberal paralysis in the face of organised Imperialism.

(1) See below p. 248 et seq.

The arrival of Jingo Imperialism.The development of Jingoism 1895-1897.

Alongside pressure group humanitarianism, prominent in the Central/East Africa issues, an aggressive popular Imperialism was developing. This had first appeared under the term "jingo" in the anti-Russian feeling of the 1870's and had been a noticeable element in the Conservative campaign to extend the Empire into the Sudan. This aggressive attitude was not only manifest in a desire to extend the boundaries of the Empire, but in a general ethos of force and violence, a disregard for native rights, and an almost hysterical antagonism to foreign nations who dared dispute any action of the British Government. This type of xenophobia was apparent in Wolseley's comments on some foreign representatives in Egypt in 1882, "...they won't dine at my table which will be a comfort. It would be unbearable to have a bundle of foreigners listening to all one said at every meal." (1)

The tones of forceful expansionism were seen in the

(1) Letters of Lord and Lady Wolseley 1870-1911, op cit, p.76.

literature of the period "...literature ...making us more familiar with India, Egypt, Africa and Burmah than with the West of Ireland or the Highlands of Scotland." (1)

The African scene, - the Mahdist rule in the Sudan, the Nile campaign of 1896-98, the Emin expedition, the Matabele Wars, all evolved a mass of novels, accounts of African exploration and of African warfare. In many cases the fact was more exciting than the fiction, though G.A. Henty among popular novelists expressed the mood of adventure and action which came to be associated with Imperial enterprise. The titles of his books, The dash for Khartoum, With Kitchener in the Soudan, With Roberts to Pretoria, showed that the novels were based on the most significant Imperialist events, - the myths of Imperialism, evoking Majuba Hill or Gordon waiting at Khartoum for the relief expedition which never arrived. Imperialism was not defended so much as taken for granted, as a Henty character remarked of the fall of Khartoum "Our fathers used to be proud to call themselves Englishmen, but by Jove there is very little reason for us to be. That Boer business was

(1) Fortnightly Review, August 1900, J.H. Muirhead, "What Imperialism means" p. 182.

shameful enough, but this is worse still." (1) In the same way in the boys' magazines, Imperialism was never openly rationalised or justified,, but nevertheless pervaded most of the stories on African incidents, army, navy or adventure generally. (2) The excitement of force and violence was eulogised by Baden-Powell's account of the Matabele War of 1896, - "A sort of excitement which takes possession of one and which I think, works on you to the same extent as a couple of glasses of champagne." (3)

The military element in Imperialism had already been very well brought out in the Boys Brigades which were a feature of the 1890's. A new daily paper, the Daily Mail, which first came out in 1896, devoted itself in the most selfconscious way to the promotion of Imperialism. It received an enthusiastic response from some sections of the population who here appeared to find exactly what they wanted; letters to the editor praised - "A paper that strives to be Imperial, patriotic, candid and humane, - not Conservative, not Liberal, not Radical,

(1) G.A. Henty, The dash for Khartoum, London 1892, p.279.

(2) See Boys Own Paper, 1899-1900.

(3) Colonel R.S.S. Baden-Powell, The Matabele Campaign, London 1897, p.190.

but just British." (1) Another writer declared "I am an ardent Imperialist, a hater of parish pump politics and I take an intense and living interest in my Empire, our Empire." (2)

Both letters indicate that Empire had, for their writers, displaced party loyalties, or rather that both parties were expected to be equally Imperialistic.

The editor of the Daily Mail summarised the basic policy of exploiting Imperialist feeling, - "We discovered at once an abounding desire for knowledge on all matters affecting the Empire. We realised that one of the greatest forces almost untapped at the disposal of the press, was the depth and volume of public interest in Imperial questions. It had been overlooked in Fleet St. how largely the British Empire is a family affair; that there is hardly a household or a family circle of any size, which does not have one or more of its members earning a living somewhere in the outer wards....The British are beyond question an Imperial race." (3) The Mail did not only develop ties with the emigrants to the colonies however, but reminded its

(1) Daily Mail, 2nd June 1897.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Kennedy Jones, Fleet Street and Downing Street, London 1920, p.146.

readers of the most emotive events in African history. The 27th February issue in 1896 was headed, "This is the anniversary of Majuba Hill." Similar reminders of "the four hundredth birthday of the British Empire" were interspersed with announcements about football matches and the racing season. (1)

The Daily Mail found an immediate occasion for its talents in the aftermath of the Jameson Raid in January 1896. This was the miscalculated result of a plot between the leaders of the mine owning immigrants to the Transvaal and Rhodes, intended to bring the Transvaal into the Empire. (2) A rising in Johannesburg was to coincide with an attack on the Transvaal by the British South Africa Company police led by Dr. Leander Jameson. Chamberlain who had become Colonial Secretary after the Conservative victory in the General Election of 1895, also knew the general lines of the plan, - in October he handed over a strip of Bechuanaland territory to the Company, - the base of the Jameson Raid. In the event the Johannesburg rising failed to materialise, but Jameson on 29th December 1895, led his troop into the Transvaal, was inevitably

(1) Daily Mail, 5th March 1896.

(2) For a detailed account of the Raid and Chamberlain's complicity see, - J. Van der Pool, The Jameson Raid, London 1951, & English Historical Review, Vol LXV111, E. Drus, "The question of complicity in the Jameson Raid."

defeated and captured. The Raid was of course disavowed by the British Government, but the telegram from the German Emperor congratulating Kruger on having preserved his independence exacerbated feelings of humiliation on the defeat of Jameson. Chamberlain diagnosed the mood of the jingos when he wrote on 4th January, - "I think that what is called an "Act of Vigour" is required to soothe the wounded vanity of the nation. It does not much matter which of our numerous foes we defy but we ought to defy someone." (1)

The Daily Mail launched into unabashed support of Jameson, undeterred by the fact that he had technically committed an unprovoked act of aggression against a foreign power. A typical comment was, - "In spite of Radical denunciations and official gravity Dr. Jim has found a warm corner in the heart of every Englishman with a drop of fighting blood in his heart, and the people had they the opportunity, would welcome him home with a roar of welcome that will ring over sea and land till its echoes reach Boer ears in distant Pretoria." (2)

(1) Chamberlain MSS. JC 5/67/39, Chamberlain to Salisbury, 4th January 1896.

(2) Daily Mail, 22nd February 1896.

It was claimed that Jameson had invaded the Transvaal in order to rescue the Uitlander women and children from the Boers and that his only crime was in not being successful. The jingos thus implicitly admitted that the extension of the Empire to include the Boer Republics was not only a reasonable aim, but distinctly laudable.

When Jameson, on being released by the Boers was on his way home he was greeted by the Mail front page with the statement "God bless you Dr. Jameson ! Here's your country's love to you !" (1) When Jameson arrived at Bow St. Court to face charges of having unlawfully invaded the Transvaal, he was several times cheered by an audience including aristocrats and Conservative members of Parliament. (2)

The Times published a poem in praise of Jameson written by Alfred Austin the Poet Laureate, of which the Nonconformist and Independent remarked "the impiety of the extraordinary war song is hardly less noticable than its jingoism." (3) Stead in the Review of Reviews commented

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid., 25th February 1896.

(3) Nonconformist and Independent, 16th January 1896.

- "The troopers were received with a more or less hilarious welcome...however mistaken he may have been...he acted with a sincere desire to serve his country...If there had been a few more Dr. Jamesons at Johannesburg, there would be no Dr. Jameson in the dock today." (1)

Even the Radical Reynolds News was jingoistic over the German telegram, - the editorial on 5th January announced, "Despite the hectoring and bullying and the irritatingly superior way of the ordinary British Tory and his Government, it is our common country and to that we owe our first allegiance...If there be a nation so ignorant as to think that England will lie down under any insult or outrage, it is grievously mistaken."

And a few days later, - "The Boers are all alike ignorant grasping and superstitious." (2) Jameson was becoming accepted as a national hero who had unfortunately been let down by his colleagues and the cowardly Johannesburg reform leaders. The only actual condemnation of the Raid as a free booting expedition was made by the Nonconformists, Peace Societies, Socialists and advanced Liberals. (3)

(1) Review of Reviews, March 1896.

(2) Reynolds Newspaper, 12th January 1896.

(3) See Concord, February 1896, Nonconformist & Independent, 9th January 1896.

Even the Metropolitan Radical Federation, usually anti-Imperialist, thought that Jameson was more to be pitied than blamed, and called on the Government to remove the name of the German Emperor from the Army and Navy lists. At the suggestion of war a voice cried "we're ready !" (1)

By May the Reynolds Newspaper had adopted a more familiar position, the Raid had become "international burglary," (2) and the sentence of fifteen months imprisonment for Jameson was hailed with "serve them right!" (3) The paper tried to rationalise its lapse into jingoism, - "There was a time when the first news of the Raid reached this country and when as yet the real facts of the case had been successfully concealed, when it was possible for a Democrat to feel considerable sympathy with the undertaking." (4) But the fact remained that the Radical press had succumbed to the jingoism of the immediate aftermath of the Raid.

Though most of the Nonconformists abhorred the Raid as a serious breach of international morality, there

(1) Reynolds Newspaper, 12th January 1896.

(2) Ibid, 19th May 1896.

(3) Ibid, 2nd August 1896.

(4) Ibid.

was some ambiguity about Jameson's position. At the Free Church Federation meeting at Bymouth a resolution was passed condemning the Raid, Jameson and calling for the withdrawal of the Company's charter, but one prominent Nonconformist declined to second it as he did not feel inclined to censure Jameson till after an enquiry had been held. (1)

In the same way most Nonconformists were appalled by the war which the Company were carrying on against the Matabele and Mashonas, (2) but the secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society at a young peoples' meeting "Thanked God for the Matabele War, for since it happened the old condition has passed away and all things had become new. He did not mean to say that the Chartered Compnay was a perfect Company. He could not agree with them on many points, but he would say that so far as circumstances would allow, they had tried to better the future of the country, and he believed that when the present rising was over the Matabele would bow to the

(1) British Weekly, 6th February 1896.

(2) See resolutions against the 1893-4 and 1896 native wars from Nonconformist Churches reported in Concord, January 1894, - protests of Society of Friends and Wesleyans; August 1896, Lancashire and Cheshire Society of Friends. December 1893, - International Arbitration League (the former Workmen's Peace Society protested.

Government of the white man." (1) Missions as usual had a strong influence on the attitudes to Imperialism of the home Churches.

A feature of jingoism which was to become characteristic in the Boer War also developed in 1896, in the form of breaking up peace meetings. What appears, not surprisingly, to have been the only public London demonstration against the Raid and in support of the Transvaal, held by Socialists in Hyde Park, was mobbed by a crowd and the speakers forced to flee. (2) The jingos then held their own meeting in favour of Jameson. None of the meetings in 1882 - 1885 in London or elsewhere, calling for evacuation of Egypt and the Sudan, were in any danger of being disrupted by hostile crowds and broken up. This was a new development, a new menace to the anti-Imperialists.

Only a very few resolutions on the Jameson Raid reached the Foreign Office during the following six months. Nor were any meetings or demonstrations opposing the Raid reported in the Liberal press. The only anti-Jameson resolution sent to the Foreign Office was from the S.D.F.

(1) Nonconformist and Independent, 21st May 1896.

(2) Reynolds Newspaper, 12th January 1896.

who characteristically urged the Government "...to revoke the charter of this filibustering and piratical concern, and to put both these sets of criminals on their trial in a criminal court." (1)

The only resolutions sent to the Foreign Office in support of the Raid were from anti-Trades Unionist, fair trade, supposedly working men's organisations. These were partly run by Graham Kelly and Peters, who appeared on the scene in the 1880's as ex-trade unionists with interests in abolishing foreign sugar bounties. (2) One of these groups, the British and Colonial Patriotic and Industrial League, with the objectives of Empire preference, sent a pro-Raid resolution at the beginning of February. (3) The National Personal Liberty League of Liverpool which was probably another of the variety of bogus working men's associations expressed "resentment at the outrages and indignities to which our fellow countrymen and women are subjected at the hands of the Boers in the Transvaal." (4)

(1) C.O. 417/195, South Africa, 1896, resolution from London S.D.F. 29th January 1896.

(2) See A. Briggs and J. Saville, (editors) Essays in Labour History, London 1960, pp 331-2.

(3) C.O. 417/195, resolution sent 1st February 1896.

(4) Ibid, resolution sent 13th March 1896.

But not much was made in the country as a whole, of the plight of the Uitlanders, which was to play an important role in the pre-Boer War agitation. There was the uncomfortable anomaly that the mine-owners were making large profits and were not eager to see the Transvaal become part of the British Empire.

There seems to have been little Liberal agitation against the Government's handling of the situation. Chamberlain's complicity in the Raid could only be guessed at of course, and the Government officially had condemned the Raid. Liberals were possibly torn between indignation at the German intervention into a specifically British affair, and the hope that the public enquiry into the Raid would deal satisfactorily with Rhodes. The House of Commons South Africa Committee of investigation was not operating till January 1897. Although it included Harcourt, Labouchere and Campbell-Bannerman, its conclusions, almost unanimously agreed to, were disappointing for Radicals. Chamberlain was exonerated and Rhodes though censured, suffered no punishment.

The Liberal Party itself was torn by leadership quarrels. On Gladstone's resignation in March 1894, Rosebery had succeeded to the leadership; this meant that an Imperialist

was not only Foreign Secretary but Prime Minister as well. The next two years were marked by constant friction between Rosebery and Harcourt the Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. (1)

There were Cabinet disputes over Harcourt's Budget proposals for death duties, over Uganda and over the Anglo-Congolese treaty of 1894 by which part of the southern Sudan was leased to the Congo Free State in return for a strip of territory linking British possessions in East Africa; this ensured Rhodes' dream of a Cape-Cairo route. (2) This treaty collapsed under French threats. Meantime the Liberals were dependent on the Irish vote, hindered by the House of Lords veto and faced with the nagging problem of satisfying their working class supporters while not alienating the middle class.

The piecemeal Newcastle programme remnants failed to win them re-election in 1895. In October 1896 Rosebery resigned from the Liberal leadership, and the Party from then on was divided into pro and anti-Imperialist sections, which were not obliterated by the selection of the middle-

(1) For the Rosebery-Harcourt rivalry see R.R. James, Rosebery, p.294 et seq. Gardiner, Life of Harcourt, *op cit*.

(2) Robinson, Gallagher and Denny, Op cit, p. 330-333.

of-the -road Campbell-Bannerman as leader in 1898. Imperialism had pervaded all layers of the Party by the end of the century. The key note of the Liberal Party was confusion; not even indignation at the Turkish massacre of the Armenians in 1896, could provide a clear call to action. The moral fervour of the Bulgarian atrocities agitation was not repeated on anything like the same scale.

Imperialism was confirmed and consolidated by the Diamond Jubilee of June 1897. There were two facets which differentiated this from the Jubilee of ten years before, - as the Friends Quarterly Examiner noticed, - "The most obvious feature of the public display was the show of force, naval and military." (1) Secondly "What was new what touched the heart of the people thronging the streets was the spectacle of the detachments drawn from the uttermost ends of the earth." (2) The Jubilee procession on 22nd June, included Indians, Ceylonese, Cypriots, Dyaks from Burma and Hausa from Nigeria. The Daily Mail saw the celebrations as essentially an Imperial show, - "The very streets of London cry out with Imperialism.

(1) July 1897.

(2) Henry Lucy, A Diary of the Unionist Parliament 1895-1900, London 1901, p.160.

Watch that black Housa soldier swing his way down Piccadilly
 ...We are all bits of one great organism of Empire. That
 is the new Imperialism and its evidence is all about us." (1)
 Sir Richard Temple in honour of the occasion published
 a biography of Victoria, "Sixty years of the Queen's
 reign, an epoch of Empire making." (2) Support for both
 the old colonial Empire and the newly acquired Empire
 had become openly unselfconscious. The Mail was able
 to refer to the spreading "Imperial boom," (3)

In the wake of the celebrations the paper examined
 "What it all meant" and found "Proud of our fathers that
 founded this Empire, proud of ourselves who have kept and
 increased it, proud of our sons Until we saw it all
 passing through the streets of our city we never quite
 realised what the Empire meant...It makes life newly worth
 living, worth living better and more strenuously to feel
 that one is a part of this enormous, this wondrous machine,
 the greatest organisation the world ever saw." (4)

(1) Daily Mail, 4th June 1897.

(2) Ibid, 10th June 1897.

(3) Ibid, 15th June 1897.

(4) Ibid, Golden Extra, 23rd June 1897.

Imperialism had become an established fact by 1897, symbolised by the Jubilee. It had come to mean not just preservation of the existing Empire, but the active increase of territory. In view of international rivalry in Africa, this could only lead to a mood of hostility and aggression towards foreign powers who stood in Britain's way. Imperialist expansion itself was necessarily an expansion of armed force. The xenophobia and jingoist hysteria of the period appears nowhere so clearly as in the Sudan Fashoda crisis of 1898.

2. The Sudan expedition and Fashoda 1896-8.

The announcement of the advance into the Sudan to Dongola came in the middle of March 1896. There was a noticable aggressive attitude in the air at this time, "...a spirit abroad which is prepared to accept such proposals, indeed all proposals, which come under the general title of a "spirited foreign policy" with enthusiams. The Armenian fiasco, the Jameson episode and the unhappy telegram from the German Emperor have all contributed to develop a sentiment which shows how much the old Berserker rage is still in the Anglo-Saxon blood." (1)

There were two House of Commons debates on the Dongola expedition on 16th and 20th March. In the 16th March division one hundred and twenty six Liberals and Irish voted against the expedition, and this was increased to one hundred and forty-five in the 20th March division. (2) On 16th March Labouchere moved an adjournment of the House in order to discuss the new advance into the Sudan, and the 20th March debate took place on an amendment by Morley

(1) Nonconformist and Independent, 19th March 1896.

(2) There were 177 Liberals and 82 Irish Nationalists in the House at this time.

to the vote of supply. The official reasons for the advance were that the defeat of the Italians by the Dervishes and Ethiopians, presented a threat to the Egyptian frontiers. In the realms of deeper diplomacy Salisbury had always intended to shut the other Powers out of the Nile Valley by occupying it in the name of Egypt. (1) It was no secret that the expedition would not be limited in extent but was the beginning of a conquest of the whole Nile Valley.

There was strong Liberal opposition from Dilke who referred to "the unwisdom, the imprudence, the folly of the expedition," (2) Harcourt and Courtney who was by this time in the curious position of being an anti-Imperialist Liberal Unionist. Labouchere revived the 1885 arguments on behalf of the Sudanese, "His sympathies were with those men to whom the country belonged and who were struggling against foreign invasion....I do not regard the Khalifa as a sort of William Tell. I regard him as a very bad man (laughter), but I admire the Soudanese for rather preferring

(1) Robinson, Gallagher and Denny, Op cit, p.346 et seq.

(2) Hansard, 4th series, Vol XXXV111, 3rd-23rd March 1896, Col 1040.

the rule of this very bad man to that of the Egyptians." (1)

Labouchere ridiculed the idea that a foreign power might divert the waters of the Nile and damage Egyptian irrigation schemes, - "it was actually argued as one of the reasons why they should take and occupy the Soudan that it was possible that some great engineer would arrive and say "I will divert the course of the Nile. Nothing simpler", and the great engineer will at once do it and Egypt would be ruined." (2)

There were strong Irish protests, William Redmond asserting "the real object of all these expeditions was simply to seize rich and fertile lands." (3)

Harcourt prophesied united Liberal resistance to the advance, but there was little agitation in the country except from the peace societies, (4) and the Radical press such as Reynolds Newspaper, "We look upon the occupation of Egypt as the worst and most fatal thing done by a British

(1) Ibid, col. 1490.

(2) Ibid, cols. 1036-7.

(3) Ibid, col. 1058.

(4) See Nonconformist and Independent, 21st May 1896.

Government in modern times." (1) The expected Liberal protest did not result. In fact by 1898 a great many Liberals had become reconciled to the conquest of the Sudan. Even in 1896 the Liberal front bench had remained neutral.

The conquest was completed on 2nd September 1898 with the battle of Omdurman; but a further complication had developed in the French Marchand expedition which had arrived at Fashoda on the Nile. On 29th September Kitchener, the Sirdar of the Egyptian army and Marchand confronted one another at Fashoda. Since Marchand refused to move the British Government began to put pressure on France to withdraw him, basing their case on the rights of both Egypt and Britain to the Sudan. Britain had helped reconquer the Sudan for Egypt but had also established a claim in her own right based on successful conquest. The outcome of the issue was obvious "Britain had a navy ready for war, France had a pack of legal arguments." (2) By October war between France and Britain seemed imminent, but Marchand left

(1) Reynolds News, 22nd March 1896.

(2) Robinson, Gallagher and Denny, Op cit, p.

Fashoda, and on the 3rd November the French Government gave him official orders to evacuate it. The crisis was over and the French had been kept out of the Nile Valley.

In Britain public opinion was unanimously anti-French, and there was a remarkable aggressive determination to go to war rather than to give way. The Echo commented - "There has been nothing like it since the national resentment at the famous German telegram....All the anti-Jingoes save Mr. Labouchere, who is practically a Frenchman, feel its force." (1)

The victory of Omdurman was greeted with an outburst of delight in which the desire to avenge Gordon played an important part. The Daily Mail headed the news of the victory, "To honour Gordon." (2) The Pall Mall Gazette declared, "One thought has leapt to expression by everybody from the man in Trafalgar Square to the German Emperor and every leader writer: Gordon is avenged. That is a perfectly proper thought, and it is sheer insincerity to pretend to be "superior" to it." (3)

(1) Echo, 14th October 1898.

(2) Daily Mail, 10th September 1898.

(3) Pall Mall Gazette, 5th September 1898.

The Gordon cult which had lingered on since 1885, experienced a sudden revival. There was an imposing burial service for Gordon at Khartoum, which had been in Mahdist hands since 1885.

G.W. Steevens, a war correspondent, expressed the prevailing mood in his account of the campaign which ran through fourteen editions in 1898-9, - "And here too were boys who could hardly lisp when their mothers told them that Gordon was dead, grown up now and appearing in the fulness of time to exact 11,000 lives for one. Gordon may die, - other Gordons may die in the future, but the same clean-limbed hood will grow up and avenge them." (1)

At the Empire music hall shortly after the victory, a portrait of Gordon was shown on the stage to "tumultuous applause", (2) and at Gatti's music hall a sketch told "...the history of Gordon and the vengeance which overtook his murderers." It went on "...no-one is surprised when the figure of the Martyr of Khartoum

(1) G. W. Steevens, With Kitchener to Khartoum, Edinburgh & London 1898, p.311.

(2) Fall Mall Gazette, 10th September 1898.

brings down the house." (1) Only a few humanitarians such as Felkin of the A.S.S. disavowed the revenge motif on the grounds that "Men misjudge Gordon greatly if they think that he would have approved of such an idea." (2)

The other element in the exultation over Omdurman was a general loathing of the Mahdists and their rule in the Sudan. This had been promoted by sensational descriptions of life in the Sudan, such as Ohrwalder's Ten years captivity in the Mahdi's camp, and Slatin Pasha's Fire and Sword in the Sudan, which became popular reading matter. These books laid heavy emphasis on the horrors of the Khalifa's rule, - Slatin commented "The progress of fifty years was ruined by the Mahdi's revolt. The Sudan fell back into the darkness from which philanthropy had rescued it. Civilisation was swamped in the flood of fanaticism." (3) He asked "...how long shall Europe and Great Britain watch unmoved the outrages of the

(1) Music Hall and Theatre Review, 7th October 1898.

(2) Contemporary Review, November 1898, pps. 482-497, R.W. Felkin, "The Soudan Question."

(3) Slatin Pasha, Fire and sword in the Sudan, translated by Colonel F.R. Wingate, London 1897, p.448.

Khalifa and the destruction of the Soudan people ?" (1)

Steevens summed up the popular opinion of life in the

Sudan, - "sun, squalor, stink and blood; that is

Mahdism," (2)

The victory of Omdurman was simplified

into a victory of right over wrong; W.T. Stead wrote,

"The 2nd September is a Red Letter day in the annals of

human freedom...the hero knight in chivalric romance

armed with lightning sword and cased in arms of adamant

mowed down the Paynim in heaps, without himself suffering

so much as a scratch." (3)

It was considered that

Egypt's lost provinces had been rescued for the benefits

of Cromerite reforms. (4)

The Nonconformists joined

in. The Baptist thought "Their defeat will prove a

blessing in disguise. It will bring in its train the

fruits of a progressive civilization..." (5)

The

argument that good government followed in the wake of

(1) Ibid, p.450.

(2) G. W. Steevens, Op cit, p.232.

(3) Review of Reviews, October 1898.

(4) Pall Mall Gazette, 5th September 1898.

(5) Baptist, 9th September 1898.

British troops was as prevalent as it had been in relation to Egypt in 1882. Even E.N. Bennett, the correspondent of the Westminster Gazette who criticized the slaughter of the Dervish wounded, was in no doubt that the occupation of the Sudan was a good thing, writing "There is a mysterious law in the working of Providence which forbids the continued existence of systems which have ceased to subserve the cause of progress. Mahdism has proved the most shameful and terrible instrument of bloodshed and oppression which the modern world has ever witnessed....Once more the arms of Great Britain have advanced the cause of civilization and made for righteousness in the history of the century." (1)

The image of the Sudanese as a people fighting for independence had largely vanished, to be replaced by the dominant image of a cruel and bloodthirsty gang of Dervishes who must be exterminated or reformed.

Hence the eulogy of Kitchener who had performed the work of victory over evil, - The Baptist proclaimed

(1) E.N. Bennett, The downfall of the Dervishes, London 1898, pps. 201-2.

"To the Sirdar unstinted honour is due and will be paid for the wonderful genius that conceived and carried out plans for an expedition of so remarkable a character." (1)

On his return to England, Kitchener was greeted with a series of banquets and celebrations. (2) Only the extreme radical press was disgusted.

Omdurman was all the popular for having redeemed the humiliation of Khartoum. Steevens could remember "thirteen or fourteen years ago being enormously proud and joyful about Tamai and Abu Klea," - the victories of the 1884-5 campaign. (3) He added "Now that the long struggle is crowned with victory we may look back on those fourteen indomitable years as one of the highest achievements of our race." (4)

The war in the Sudan was a microcosm of all the adventure and heroics so much admired at the time, - Steevens wrote of the crews of the gun boats which attacked the Dervishes on the Nile, "they were just the

(1) Baptist, 9th September 1898.

(2) See Daily Mail, 27th October 1898.

(3) G.W. Steevens, Op cit. p.4.

(4) Ibid. p.21.

cutting out heroes of one's youth, come to life. They might have walked straight out of the "Boys Own Paper," (1) The War was a miniature success story and added a good deal to the glorification of the art of war. Kitchener's planning was much admired, - Steevens without any irony remarked "You feel he ought to be patented and shown with pride at the Paris International Exhibition. British Empire: Exhibit No. 1. - the Soudan Machine." (2)

Aggressive attitudes had become ingrained, - as a character in a Henty novel said "I don't know anything about the chaps in Egypt, but if there is going to be a row, I say let us have our share in it." (3) The slaughter of the battle of Omdurman could be excused, - "...things half theatrical, half brutal to tell of when blood has cooled, yet things to rejoice over, in that they show the fighting devil has not after all been civilized out of Britons." (4) Steevens described horrific battle scenes without a qualm, "Black spindle legs curled up to meet red-

(1) Ibid, p.83.

(2) Ibid, p.46.

(3) G.A. Henty, The dash for Khartoum, London 1892, p.105.

(4) G. W. Steevens, Op cit, p.274.

gimbleted black face, heads without faces and faces without anything below." and a couple of lines later was delighting in the steam rolling war machine, "Not a flaw, not a check, not a jolt; and not a flock on its shining success. Once more, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah !" (1)

This was the book of which a reviewer in the Nonconformist British Weekly remarked, "This is a book to buy and to keep and to turn over if ever the flame of patriotism burns low. We should like our children to read it in the schools." (2)

Bennett justified the use of explosive bullets in wars against savages, "The nervous system of the savage is a far less delicate organism, and nothing short of a crushing blow will check his wild onset." (3)

The commercial prospects of the Sudan were, in 1898, only a minor consideration and were often discounted, "The Sudan is a desert and a depopulated desert...Gum arabic and ostrich feathers and Dongola dates will hardly buy cotton stuffs enough for Lancashire to feel the

(1) Ibid, p.151.

(2) British Weekly, 13th October 1898.

(3) E.N. Bennett, Op cit, p.229.

difference." (1) A very strong motive for satisfaction at the conquest of the Sudan was psychological, "We have gained precious national self-respect....We were humiliated and out of pocket; we had embarked in a foolish adventure and it had turned out even worse than anybody had foreseen. Now this was surely the very point where a nation of shopkeepers should have cut its losses and turned to better business elsewhere...We did nothing such. We tried to; but our dogged fighting dander would not let us. We could not sit down till the defeat was redeemed. We gave more money; we gave the lives of the men we loved, - and we conquered the Soudan again. Now we can permit ourselves to think of it in peace." (2)

Only the Radical and peace press ran counter to the atmosphere of jubilation, - Reynolds News and Concord expressed horror at the massacre of the Dervishes and "the outburst of ferocious joy with which large numbers of the Establishment received the news of this festival of lyddite shells and machine guns." (3)

(1) G.W. Steevens, Op cit. p.317.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Concord, October 1898.

Over Fashoda even the Radical press joined in the opposition to the French claims. There was some confusion, as the Manchester Guardian quietly pointed out, (1) as to whether the British claim rested on Egypt's prior rights to the Sudan, or on Britain's sole right of conquest, but this did not prevent the French claim being regarded as an intolerable intrusion into a British sphere of influence. The French "have no more right to be in Fashoda than they would have to throw a regiment or two across into Guernsey." as the Pall Mall Gazette put it. (2) The Sudan was not important so much for its own merits as because it was essential to the development of an African Empire, "The French are trespassing in Egyptian territory and if trespassers will not go when civilly invited, they are usually ejected. England will stand no more of the tricks of the kind that have been played by the Quai d'Orsay in West Africa and Siam. She means to have her clear road from the Cape to the Mediterranean and no Fashoda in the hands

(1) Manchester Guardian, 13th October 1898.

(2) Pall Mall Gazette, 13th September 1898.

French will be allowed to break the continuance of the strip of red." (1) As the danger of war grew, it was obvious that the struggle was about something more than a piece of desert, "...it is not an unhealthy spot on the Nile which is at stake, or even a fertile province, but the whole question of British domination in Egypt and the vaster and larger question of the right of the British Empire to exist..." (2) The existence of the Empire had become synonymous to many people with expansion.

An extremely Francophobe and warlike attitude prevailed. Trafalgar Day on 21st October, was celebrated by the Navy League with greater gusto than usual. The Leamington Town Council, on the request of the League, decided on special celebrations by hoisting the Union Jack on public buildings. (3) Troops returned from the Sudan received a highly demonstrative welcome on their arrival at Waterloo Station. (4) Punch published an offensively

(1) Daily Mail, 13th September 1898.

(2) Ibid, 22nd October 1898.

(3) Birmingham Daily Post, 22nd October 1898.

(4) Daily Mail, 7th October 1898.

anti-French cartoon, depicting the French nation as an organ grinder's monkey. (1)

The Radical press gradually succumbed to the anti-French hysteria. The progress towards consensus opinions can be traced in the Reynolds Newspaper, usually anti-expansionist. On 16th October the paper was quite convinced that "we are not going to be dragged into a disgraceful and idiotic war about Fashoda.." (2) But by 23rd October the attitude had changed; it was admitted that the original occupation of Egypt had been wrong and was responsible for all the Sudan complications, "All the same if it comes to blows, our country first. We can settle our domestic quarrels afterwards by punishing those who have led us into this series of disasters." (3) On 30th October the editorial column was proclaiming that if war broke out "we shall await the result with perfect confidence in our cause and in our might." (4)

Even the Positivists slipped from their anti-Imperialist

(1) Punch, 14th October 1898.

(2) Reynolds Newspaper, 16th October 1898.

(3) Ibid, 23rd October 1898.

(4) Ibid, 30th October 1898.

opinions on this occasion. Beesly carefully demolished the British case, - Britain had no right to Egypt and therefore no right to the Sudan; Egypt's own history of repressive rule in the Sudan made her also ineligible to rule there. ⁽¹⁾ But Frederick Harrison the following month supported Kitchener's expedition, "The real inhabitants of the country heartily welcomed the repulse of the Dervish invaders who had crushed them, ... while we are there we are bound to do the best we can for that country." The Marchand expedition came in for strong censure, "a ragged handful of French Frances-tireurs secretly sent forth....to make mischief and to stick up bits of bunting in Central Africa.... an idiotic and scurvy trick." He also referred to the "good temper, moderate and honest peaceableness which marked the official action in our country." ⁽²⁾

It is likely that the Dreyfus case which was proceeding at this time was responsible for a good deal of Francophobia and animosity towards the French Government. It may also have appeared that to be pro-French involved condoning

(1) Positivist Review, November 1898.

(2) Ibid, December 1898.

French Imperialism; in a struggle between two Imperialisms French and British, Radicals would tend to take the British side. But support for British claims of course meant accepting Egypt and the Sudan as parts of the Empire, and a further erosion of anti-Imperialism.

Blunt saw Fashoda as a further turning point in the attitudes of Liberals towards Imperialism, "I venture to affirm that its unquestioning acceptance and justification by the whole free English nation, marks the deed as a turning point in our character, which separates our way of looking at things, right or wrong, for ever from that of our fathers." (1) The change in Liberal attitudes was recorded by F.A. Channing as advanced Gladstonian radical, - "With the passing of Gladstone from politics, the old inspirations and the old enthusiasms, the glowing devotion to ideals, passed too. In their place disintegrating forces of distrust, jealousy, animosity, spread the poisonous atmosphere of misrepresentation and intrigue. The masterful spirit of Liberal Imperialism sprang to the fore, noble in some of its aspirations and sympathies, but

(1) Quoted in Positivist Review, October 1898.

perilous to the party, because its attitude was largely personal and led directly to more or less actual hostility towards the old followers of the Gladstone creed, thus making the hearty co-operation of all in the policy of the party, impossible." (1) Channing was not immune from Imperialism, - he said in the Fashoda crisis, - "In foreign policy Liberals were firm and fearless. They would not surrender everything for peace, but said that every English right ~~should be~~ should be matched by generous and just interpretation of the rights of others. That was the spirit in which Liberals were meeting the French crisis. They wished no humiliation to France... But France was in the wrong. England was the trustee of Egypt. They should show no hesitation. England was right. Her just and pure administration had done wonders for Egypt, giving her prosperity. If "evacuation" were suggested, he could not now support it in the Soudan. If English administration could bring similar prosperity he would have no share in checking the result. He had always voted against such

(1) F.A. Channing, Op cit. p.177.

expeditions. The cruelty and tyranny of the Khalifa and the Mahdi were the justification." (1)

From Rosebery downwards, the mass of Liberals appeared to subscribe to such views. Rosebery made his famous speech at Epsom, "There has been a disposition in the last two years to encroach and impinge on the rights of England in various parts of the world in a way which is not gratifying to Englishmen. The present Government has shown no want of conciliation and its conciliatory disposition has been widely misunderstood. If the nations of the world are under the impression that the ancient spirit of Great Britain is dead, or her resources are weakened, or that her population is less determined than ever it was to maintain the rights and honour of its flag, they make a mistake which can only end in a disastrous conflagration." (2) Rosebery thus associated himself and by implication many Liberals, with the policy of the Conservative Government. The transparent threat to France was endorsed by other M.Ps. Asquith, speaking

(1) Ibid, pps. 204-5.

(2) Quoted in Reynolds News, 16th October 1898.

at Fife, asserted that the Sudan belonged to Egypt and hence lay within the British sphere of influence. ⁽¹⁾

James Bryce said much the same thing to his constituents.

Even Harcourt agreed that the French were in the wrong on this occasion. ⁽²⁾

William Allen M.P. for Ashton-under-Lyme, declared, "...a nation's honour stood before anything" and these sentiments seemed to be approved by the majority of his audience. ⁽³⁾

At a Liberal meeting in Oldham the chairman was delighted that Lord Salisbury had taken a firm stand over Fashoda (cheers) and this view was supported by the M.P. James Duckworth; another speaker said "Liberals were patriots first and particians (sic) afterwards." No-one disagreed with this attitude. ⁽⁴⁾

Sir James Leese M.P. said at an Accrington meeting, "He was no Jingo, but he was an Englishman and he was getting just a little tired of turning the other cheek." ⁽⁵⁾

Judging by the tone of many Liberal meetings, members of

(1) Daily Mail, 14th October 1898.

(2) Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, 27th October 1898.

(3) Birmingham Daily Post, 27th October 1898.

(4) Manchester Guardian, 14th October 1898.

(5) Ibid, 17th October 1898.

the audience could have been excused for imagining they were at a Conservative gathering. The Sheffield Liberal paper stated, "Liberal or Conservative we are all on the side of the Government if the Government stands firm as we believe it will." (1) Even the non-interventionist and Christian periodical the New Age, thought that France was more in the wrong than Britain. (2)

Rarely was such unanimity in politics seen, and the Liberal attitude was in stark contrast to the protests against the Sudan war of 1885. On the basis of Liberal opinion in 1885, one would have expected a much greater opposition to the policy of the Conservative Government in 1898. In fact there was very little opposition at all. Of forty resolutions dealing with the Sudan and the Fashoda crisis, which arrived at the Foreign Office between 25th October and 7th December, all but seven were in support of the Government. (3) Of the thirty-three pro-Government resolutions, twenty-seven were from Conservative, Constitutional or Unionist bodies, three were from Primrose League Habitations, one from a Church

(1) Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, 14th October 1898.

(2) 3rd November 1898.

(3) F.O. 83/1739, Africa, Resolutions on various subjects sent to F.O. 1898-9.

of England debating society, one from a commercial travellers association, and one from a Middlesex Urban District Council. There may have been one sample resolution circulating, since three of the Conservative resolutions in different parts of the country, made an almost identical reference to "British interests in the White Nile territory." But apart from this, there is no evidence of any organised attempts to get resolutions passed. Two of the resolutions followed lantern slides on the Sudan. Only two mentioned commerce, - the Cardiff branch of the commercial travellers association appropriately hoped that "a vast productive area will be restored to civilization and commerce." (1) And Battersea Conservative Association also referred to be benefits of "civilization and commerce." (2) Civilization was a more popular argument than commerce alone, but most of the resolutions gave the chief emphasis to the right of England and/or Egypt to occupy the Sudan. Lymington Constitutional Club approved of the victory in the Sudan

(1) Ibid, resolution sent 26th October 1898.

(2) Ibid, resolution sent 27th October 1898.

"which thus re-establishes the power of Egypt in the Sudan and conclusively confirms that paramount influence of the British Empire in Egypt." (1) There was strong support for a stand against the French. A Norwich Polling District Unionist Association was willing to make any sacrifice "to keep intact the fruits of the victorious war in the Soudan." (2)

Of the peace resolutions, one was rather equivocal; sent by Maidenhead Pleasant Sunday Afternoon on 5th November, it congratulated the Government on the successful outcome of the Fashoda incident and at the same time hoped for peace "in the great Empire." There was only one resolution from a Liberal Association, from South Manchester which "deprecates the indulgence in bellicose and inflammatory language in relation to the Fashoda difficulty." (3) No opinion was given as to the rights or wrongs of the issue. Two resolutions came from the I.L.P. from the National Administrative Council and Hackney branch, - and one from Birmingham Workmen's Peace Association.

(1) Ibid, resolution sent 5th December 1898.

(2) Ibid, resolution sent 28th October 1898.

(3) Ibid, resolution sent 24th October 1898.

The anti-war resolutions were completed with two resolutions from Nonconformist groups; Manchester Congregational Union passed no judgement on the question but hoped for peace, and Liverpool Baptists, representing between four and five thousand members, called for arbitration. (1) On the whole the Nonconformist Churches like the Liberals, supported the Government. The editorial policy of the British Weekly accepted the occupation of Egypt, "Those who watch the proceedings of our officials in distant lands are prouder of what Lord Cromer and the Sirdar have accomplished, than of any deeds of Empire since the time of the Indian Mutiny..". And on Fashoda "there is only one opinion in London. For the first time in years there is a general readiness to go to war rather than to make any concessions." (2) The Baptist did not think that Fashoda was a suitable subject for arbitration and when France backed down remarked "right has triumphed, which is another way of saying that her immoral exploits have failed." (3) A clue to this

(1) Ibid., resolutions sent 27th October & 1st November 1898.

(2) British Weekly, 29th September 1898.

(3) Baptist, 11th November 1898.

attitude can be found in Nonconformist aversion to French colonial methods, "absolutely wicked doings in Tunis, in Siam, in Madagascar." (1) At the Congregational Union meeting on 13th October, the attitude of the main speakers was frankly Imperialist, Dr. Goddrich "had not spoken half a dozen sentences before the startled assembly listened to him breathing defiance of France and that she must "from Fashoda retire or retreat." (2) J.G. Rogers said "Unless England was prepared to say she would not have anything to do with any Foreign Policy whatever, he failed to see how it was possible for her to surrender on the question of Fashoda. Congregationalists were as true and loyal to their country as the most rampant Imperialists... while they were prepared to fulfill the great destiny which seemed marked out for the British nation, whether they liked it or not..." (3) There were however, a few letters to the press protesting that these views were not held by all Nonconformists. (4)

(1) Ibid, 28th October 1898.

(2) British Weekly, 20th October 1898.

(3) Baptist, 21st October 1898.

(4) See New Age, 3rd November 1898.

A few days later at an Exeter Hall meeting "one of the speakers remarked that the members of the Metropolitan Christian Churches, under whose auspices the meeting was called, were not peace-at-any-price people." (1)

These sentiment/ were all the more strange in view of the fact that the meeting had been called in order to discuss the proposals for a peace conference at the Hague suggested by the Czar. The Nonconformists were in the forefront of support for arbitration procedures and disarmament policies. Between 31st August 1898 and 22nd July 1899 the Foreign Office received over one thousand resolutions supporting the Czar's Rescript. (2) The first resolutions came in from September to December and coincided with the Fashoda crisis, but hardly any referred to the Sudan or Fashoda at all. A good many resolutions expressed concern at growing militarism and the armaments race but never mentioned Fashoda as an instance of this. Arbitration was merely advocated in the abstract and seemed to be quite removed from the very practical struggle going on between France and England. There were

(1) Daily Mail, 27th October 1898.

(2) F.O. 83/1734-1738, Disarmament Conference resolutions 31st August 1898 to 22nd July 1899.

only about four mentions of the Fashoda issue in about four hundred resolutions, from the Peace Society, Rochdale and District Methodist Council, a Quarterly meeting of the Society of Friends and at a Ipswich meeting where Ellen Robinson a Quaker said that the dispute with France ought to be submitted to arbitration. The Bishop of Norwich disagreed "what would become of our colonies and our territories all over the world?" (1)

The Quakers were divided over the Fashoda issue, but the Meeting for Sufferings at the request of Ellen Robinson, issued a minute hoping for a peaceful settlement. (2)

The Friends also disapproved of the slaughter of the Dervishes at Omdurman and the Peace Committee expressed its appreciation of the M.Ps. who voted against the Parliamentary grant to Kitchener in June 1899. (3)

The Church of England predictably supported the Government. The C.M.S. in particular had not forgotten the idea of a Gordon Memorial Mission, formulated in 1885. General Hutchinson spoke to Kitchener in November on

(1) F.O. 83/1735.

(2) Friend, 11th November 1898.

(3) Society of Friends MSS. Minute Book of Peace Committee 1888-1900, minutes of meeting held 6th July 1899.

behalf of the Society urging that a medical mission be permitted to start at Khartoum, but Kitchener was not enthusiastic for immediate mission work in the Sudan. (1)

The miniscule opposition to the Government centred around a few Liberal M.Ps., the Socialists and the peace societies. Wilfred Lawson inevitably condemned the Sudan campaign, (2) and Courtney spoke against the forward policy in his constituency; Kate Courtney noted "France might have invaded Devon to judge from the furious language used about the rather foolish adventure of Marchand. Leonard pleaded for calmer judgement and ventured to suggest it was a question for discussion... considering how few must have agreed, the audience were wonderfully kind." (3) A meeting was held in Sheffield - possibly convened by the anti-Imperialist H.J. Wilson M.P. - and an anti-Government resolution passed. (4)

Labour Leader foresaw the development of capitalism in the Sudan, "In a few years time the sweating system will

(1) C.M.S. MSS. G/AC 4/25, correspondence 1898, Hutchinson to Kitchener, 2nd November 1898.

(2) Echo, 10th October 1898.

(3) Courtney MSS. Br.Lib.Pol.Sc. Vol 49, Kate Courtney's Diary 1897-1900, entry for 19th September 1898.

(4) H.J. Wilson MSS. MD 2517, extract from the Sheffield Independent 2nd October 1899, ref. to 1898 meeting.

be firmly established from Cape Town to Cairo, which is glorious news for capitalists." And went on sardonically, "...when events such as the Welsh coal struggle arouse as much attention among workers as idealistic conceptions about "avenging Gordon", I shall regard the London worker with some respect." (1) This was an admission of how deep the enthusiasm for the conquest of the Sudan had pervaded even the working classes. Hardie repeatedly exhorted Socialist and trades union bodies to pass resolutions against the impending war, but apparently with little effect. (2)

Justice declared "We cannot imagine any set of circumstance under which it would be worth the while of either country to go to war about Fashoda." (3) Popular branch of the S.D.F. took the line that Imperialism conflicted with social reform, - the School Board "instead of asking the children to subscribe towards a college at Khartoum, ought to attend to its own duties towards the children, many of whom are inadequately housed, clothed and

(1) Labour Leader, 10th September 1898.

(2) Ibid., 29th October 1898.

(3) Justice, 15th October 1898.

fed and consequently badly educated." (1)

Only the remnants of the peace party of 1885 were left, a few Nonconformists, peace societies and the Liberal Forwards, whose president was G.W.E. Russell, and who called on Liberal to avert war. (2) Hyndman commented accurately, "Wholesale slaughterings and annexation, conquests avowedly for conquests sake, which thirty years ago would have aroused bitter and determined protests from Englishmen of all classes who could have made themselves felt, have passed almost without notice except from Socialists and from a few belated survivors from a period when Radicalism meant something more than the caucusite grab and sneakery of today." (3)

Some of the Liberal opposition had melted away even since 1896. In the House of Commons debate on the Sudan on 24th February 1899, Edward Grey M.P. for Berwick and Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the last Liberal administration, announced that though he had voted with Morley in 1896, he intended to vote with the Government

(1) Reynolds Newspaper, 11th December 1898.

(2) Echo, 25th & 27th October 1898.

(3) Justice, 15th October 1898.

on this occasion; he had decided that after all, the expedition to the Sudan had been inevitable, timely and opportune. (1)

He ended with a commitment to a full Imperialist position, "I think that if the character of a great nation is in danger of being deteriorated it is ...by taking too narrow a view of the obligations of its position... and by refusing to undertake the new responsibilities which are after all inevitable in the case of an Empire like ours." (2) Campbell-Bannerman viewed the Nile expedition with approval and recognised that the occupation of Egypt was to be semi-permanent. (3)

The Liberal M.P. for Barnsley, Joseph Walton, thought that foreign policy "ought not to be regarded by any means as a party question." (4) The mass of Liberals in fact saw little to disagree with in Conservative policy in the Sudan.

In the division there were only fifty-eight votes against the Government and seventeen of these came from Irish Nationalists. (5) Nine of the Liberals were not

(1) Hansard, 4th series, Vol LXV11, 21st February-6th March 1899. col.489.

(2) Ibid, col.498.

(3) Ibid, col.512 et seq.

(4) Ibid, col.510.

(5) Ibid, col523.

perhaps strongly anti-Imperialist, since they voted for the Government in June in the debate over the grant of £30,000 to Kitchener on his peerage. This debate centred on the killing of the wounded Derishes after Omdurman and the mutilation of the Mahdi's body. Concord the journal of the I.A.P.A. first drew attention to this in November 1898, but the greatest publicity was obtained by an article in the January 1899 edition of the Contemporary Review by E.N. Bennett. Bennet alleged that the Arab wounded had been killed by both Egyptian and British troops and that the body of the Mahdi had been removed on Kitchener's orders from its tomb at Khartoum, the head wrenched off and the trunk thrown into the Nile.

These accusations could ^{not} be directly denied, the Government claimed that some wounded dervishes made surprise attacks on British soldiers, and the destruction of the Mahdi's tomb was excused on the grounds that it had been necessary in order to destroy the attachment of his followers. (1)

Some feeling was mobilised in Parliament about these

(1) Parliamentary Papers, Vol CX11, C 9133, 1899, Despatches from H.M. Agent and Consul General in Egypt, respecting the conduct of the British and Egyptian troops after the battle of Omdurman.

incidents. Blunt wrote at the end of February "I have been helping to get up an agitation against the Parliamentary grant of £30,000 to Kitchener and questions have been asked in the House of Commons." (1) But he wrote later that the Liberal press was "afraid of touching the matter." (2) He helped to brief Morley who was to lead the opposition, but found Morley much too conciliatory and feeble, "His arguments were weak to fatuity, and he gave himself away over and over again till the House laughed at him." (3) Lawson summed up the Radical case with more vigour, "What we did was to shoot down people at a long range to which they could not reply, and that is looked upon as one of the greatest achievements of British arms... Why should this blood money be paid and why should Lord Kitchener have this gift? Because a soldier has done his duty, why should he be put upon a pedestal above all other public servants?" (4)

But only fifty-one Liberals and Irish voted in the

(1) W.S. Blunt, My Diaries, Vol 1, p.386.

(2) Ibid, p.396.

(3) Ibid, p.398.

(4) Hansard, 4th series, Vol LXX11, 31st May-19th June 1899, col 381 et seq.

minority, seven less than in February. Twenty of these were Irish, leaving only thirty one Liberals. From a study of these divisions a hard core of Liberal anti-Imperialists emerges. It included Morley, G.B. Clark (M.P. for Caithness), Labouchere, Lawson, J. E. Ellis (Nottinghamshire), F. Maddison (Sheffield, Brightside), H.J. Wilson (Holmfirth) Philip Stanhope (Burnley) and a group of Miners' M.Ps. - from the north east, - Thomas Burt, Charles Fenwick, John Wilson and L. Atherley Jones. Other M.Ps. who voted against the Government in both divisions were, James Caldwell (Mid-Lanark), F. A. Channing, Dilke, Benjamin Pickard (Normanton Yorks), E.H. Pickersgill (Bethnal Green), J. Samuel (Stockton on Tees), S. Smith (Flint), R. Souttar (Dumfriesshire), W.C. Steadman (Stepney), W. Wedderburn (Banffshire), J.G. Weir (Ross and Cromarty), T.P. Whittaker (Spen Valley Yorks), J. Carvell Williams (Mansfield), C.P. Scott (Leigh Lancs), and J.H. Yoxall (West Nottinghamshire). It spite of Rosebery's influence Scotland provided a fair share of anti-Imperialists, with clusters in Durham and in London. These were the M.Ps. who were to take the lead in opposing the Boer War.

But fewer than one sixth of Liberal M.Ps. were taking an anti-expansionist line at this period, and some of these were uncertain in their commitment against expansion, - Channing for example. There are a variety of possible reasons for the general Liberal acceptance of Imperialism in 1898. There had of course been a barrage of propaganda since 1885, especially relating to Mahdist rule in the Sudan. It was more and more difficult to regard the Mahdists as romantic freedom fighters. The general attitude towards natives in any case was particularly patronising. Bennett thought that most Egyptians were "slaves by nature", ⁽¹⁾ and Steevens wrote "Take the native Egyptian official of today. No words can express his ineptitude, his laziness, his helplessness, his dread of responsibility, his maddening red tape formalism." ⁽²⁾ And a writer of a Gordon biography, - "I do not think much of the Egyptians as soldiers nor of Egyptian men. I have seen one of our British sailors armed only with his fists, walk through a score of the Alexandrian scum; they seemed to fall before

(1) E.N. Bennett, Op cit, p. 11.

(2) G.W. Steevens, Op cit, p. 321.

him on every side." (1)

There was also a contradiction in Nonconformist thought; a feeling that foreign races ought to be left alone conflicted with the zeal to reform, to establish good Government and to spread Liberal culture to less fortunate lands. The Sudan was obviously a highly suitable candidate for the benefits of Liberal administration.

Over Fashoda Liberals possibly did not need much encouragement to be anti-French in view of the Dreyfus case which was bringing the French establishment into great disrepute. But it is noticable that the issue seemed to be posed in terms of a choice between taking either the British or the French side in the dispute; there was very little condemnation of Imperialism itself as practised by both nations. To a great extent the assumptions of expansionist Imperialism had been accepted.

The attitude of the Liberals and Nonconformists in 1898 contrasts with their opposition to the impending war with the Transvaal a few months later. There was naturally more affinity with the Protestant Boers, bullied by the might of Great Britain, than with France, a first

(1) G. Stables, Op cit, p.314.

class power who might be expected to fend for herself. There was however an equal certainty in 1898 and 1899 that Britain would be victorious in any war on which she embarked. To some extent the opposition to the prospect of a South African War implied an attempt to get back on some of the old anti-Imperialist lines. But even the anti-war party in 1899 had absorbed a good many Imperial attitudes. Only a section of them could be termed anti-Imperialist. The rest were merely differentiated by thinking that Imperial interests did not justify a war.

Public opinion up to the outbreak of the Boer
War, May to October 1899.

After the stir caused by the Jameson Raid and the South African Committee in 1897, popular interest in South Africa lapsed in Britain and was not revived till May 1899. Chamberlain thought that in the event of a war with the Transvaal the Government could not rely on popular support. He wrote to Alfred Milner, who had been appointed High Commissioner in South Africa in 1897 and was noted for his determination to federate the Dutch colonies with the Cape and Natal, in 1898, "Most of the grievances of which we have to complain are of a character which would not excite great sympathy in this country and they would not be considered sufficient to constitute a *causus belli*." (1) Milner visited England from November 1898 to January 1899 and afterwards wrote, "Public opinion has been quite averted from South Africa and is only gradually regaining

(1) The Milner Papers, edited by Cecil Headlam, London 1931-3, Vol 1, p.227.

interest in that subject." (1) Up to June 1899 in fact the bulk of anti-Boer opinion came from Natal and Cape province and from Uitlanders in the Transvaal. (2)

By April 1899, Milner had decided that British public opinion must be alerted in preparation for the trial of strength with the Transvaal which lay ahead. He was anxious to maximise the grievances of the Uitlanders in the Transvaal, writing "What I wish particularly is that all this mass of material which we are pouring into you may not go wholly unutilised for the instruction of the public...Will you not publish a Blue Book and see that the Edgar shootings and Jones trials, amphitheatre meetings etc. etc. get rubbed into the public mind." (3) The famous "helots" telegram describing the Uitlanders as "...thousands of British

(1) Ibid., p.301-2.

(2) See letters in Chamberlain MSS. from South African correspondents, alleging Boer conspiracies to take over the whole of South Africa, under Dutch rule etc.

(3) Edgar was a British workman who was killed by a Boer policeman in 1898; he was said to be resisting arrest and the policeman was acquitted. Public meetings of Uitlanders in Johannesburg were forbidden.

subjects kept permanently in the position of helots, constantly chafing under undoubted grievances and calling vainly to Her Majesty's Government for redress..." (1) was Milner's main contribution to this scheme, though it was not published till June.

The press began to take an interest in South Africa with the Bloemfontein Conference between Milner and Kruger which lasted from 31st May to 5th June when negotiations broke down. Resolutions sent to the Colonial Office on South Africa began shortly after this on 14th June. (2) There were five hundred and eighty-five resolutions altogether, but the bulk of them did not appear till September. Most of the anti-war resolutions in fact were sent when war was almost inevitable.

The development of public opinion took place against a background of complicated bargaining between Britain and the Transvaal. The immediate quarrel was over the political and civil rights of Uitlanders working in the Johannesburg goldfields. But the Government was ultimately

(1) Quoted in Edgar Holt, The Boer War, London 1958, p.67.

(2) C.O. 417/277/278.

concerned with the wider question of British paramountcy over the whole of South Africa, threatened by the existence of the two independent Dutch republics and a strong Cape Dutch party which sympathised with them. Public imagination was caught by the plight of the British miners, taxed without representation by a small rural oligarchy, but the question of British supremacy in South Africa was more vaguely perceived by Conservatives and Liberals alike. On the other hand to the official mind supremacy was all important. Disagreement over Uitlander franchise was not significantly large, - Milner demanded a five year retroactive franchise and seven seats in the Volksraad, while Kruger would only offer a seven year qualifying period and five seats in the Volksraad. (1) In August Smuts proposed a five year franchise on condition that Britain dropped all claims to suzerainty, undertook never again to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal and submitted all future disputes to arbitration. (2) These were precisely

(1) G.H.L. Le May, British supremacy in South Africa, O.U.P. 1965, pp. 1-25.

(2) Edgar Holt, Op cit, p.70.

the conditions which the British Government could not accept without losing the basis for dominance in South Africa. The proposals were refused and Chamberlain on 28th August warned Kruger that "the sands are running down in the glass." (1) In the event the Boers lost a good deal of justification and sympathy by issuing an ultimatum on 9th October demanding the withdrawal from South Africa of all British reinforcements. They followed this up by the invasion of Natal on 11th October. The fact that the Transvaal had started the war, - to be joined by the Orange Free State, - appeared to vindicate the theory that the Dutch had been conspiring to establish their own supremacy in South Africa. It also created in Britain a mood which favoured winning the war, without worrying unnecessarily over tiresome arguments about paramountcy or the exact degree of technical independence which the Transvaal had gained by the Conventions of 1881-4.

But up to the outbreak of war, the volume of anti-war opinion was greater than pro-government opinion.

(1) Ibid, p.71.

On 7th July Chamberlain informed Milner, "As I have constantly warned you, opinion here is strongly opposed to war, although the necessity of resorting to war in the last resort is gradually making its way among all classes. If we were driven to this last extremity, I think the Government could rely upon the vast majority of its own supporters and a minority of the opposition, but the bulk of the opposition would probably take the opportunity to denounce us." (1) Later, Chamberlain gave the impression of a gradual but definite build up of anti-Boer feeling. Historians such as R.C.K. Ensor > Garvin, (2) put over the view that the Government was urged on to war by the bellicosity and aggression of the public, and that the bulk of the nation supported the Government on the issue. This state of mind was more apparent after war had broken out, but hardly applies to the pre-war period. The resolutions sent to the Colonial Office from 14th June to 31st October, provide a good general guide to public opinion; the picture is not

(1) Chamberlain MSS. JC 10/9, Chamberlain to Milner 7th July 1899.

(2) See R.C.K. Ensor, England 1870-1914, pp.245-51.

Garvin, Life of Joseph Chamberlain, Vol 3.

altered when resolutions not sent to the Colonial Office are also taken into account. Opinion expressed in the resolutions can be most satisfactorily divided into anti-war and pro-Government. Pro-Boer would be a misnomer since many of the anti-war resolutions sympathised with the Uitlanders; nor were all anti-war expressions of opinion necessarily anti-Imperialist. Many of the pro-Government resolutions were nothing more than votes of confidence in the Ministry, Chamberlain or Milner. (1)

Of the total resolutions three hundred and thirty were pro-Government and two hundred and fifty-four anti-war. (2)

But one hundred and forty of the pro-Government resolutions were dated 12th October and after, - after war had broken out; one four anti-war resolutions were sent after 12th October. The anti-war resolutions in fact began to fall off from 9th October, the date of the Boer ultimatum. Before the outbreak of war then, the totals were one hundred and ninety pro-Government resolutions and two hundred and fifty anti-war

(1) References to resolutions refer to the two C.O. files 417/277/278, where the resolutions are arranged in chronological order, - file 417/278 contains resolutions from 5th October onwards.

(2) One of the resolutions, from a break away group of the I.A.F.A. was so ambiguous that it has not been included in the breakdown. For a table of resolutions see Appendix 1.

resolutions. The anti-war group was thus in a substantial majority.

There were two main sources of Government support, the Conservative Associations and Primrose League branches, and meetings organised by the Imperial South African Association formed in 1896 "to uphold British supremacy and to promote the interests of British subjects in South Africa with full recognition of colonial self-government." It is recorded as having held over four hundred meetings in 1899, both before and after the war started, and only a small part of its activity appears in the Colonial Office files. ⁽¹⁾ The I.S.A.A. sent round speakers, some from South Africa, and may have been responsible for a printed resolution expressing confidence in Milner which appeared at a number of Conservative meetings early in the campaign.

In June sixteen out of nineteen resolutions were pro-Government, most of them accounted for by a series of meetings in Lancashire. In July twelve out of twenty-four resolutions were pro-Government. In August a number

(1) See Journal of Modern History, 1954, J.A. Galbraith, "The pamphlet campaign in the Boer War."

of "Milner" meetings in the north east, ensured fifteen pro-Government resolutions out of twenty-one. But in September the anti-war resolutions began coming in from Nonconformists, Liberals and working class groups. The total numbers of resolutions began to build up in September as well. In the first two weeks of September twenty-nine out of forty one resolutions were against war; in the third week, forty-two out of fifty-four; and in the last week, sixty-three out of ninety-one. The flood of resolutions reached its peak in the first eleven days of October when there were equal numbers of pro-Government and anti-war declarations, - ninety-five of each. The anti-war resolutions were thus largely a last minute attempt to avert hostilities.

There was thus considerable aversion to the idea of war with the Transvaal, which is hard to reconcile with the frequently drawn picture of a nation completely united in the desire for Imperialist aggression. (1)

(1) In addition to resolutions sent to the C.O. I have found 28 more Nonconformist resolutions, 4 Quaker resolutions, 28 Liberal resolutions, and 20 extra successful anti-war public meetings. This totals 80 more anti-war resolutions to those in the files. Even allowing for an equivalent increase in I.S.A.A. or Conservative meetings, and taking into account 10 unsuccessful anti-war meetings, organised anti-war opinion is still in a majority up to 11th October.

Had the British initiated hostilities, the peace party might have put up a stronger front against the war. As it was the peace movement largely collapsed after the Boer attack on Natal. But the outbreak of the war was in the nature of a *fait accompli*; once war had broken out, it was easy for the Government to appeal to patriotism, especially in view of the fact that British forces were at first defeated. The immediate task became the conquest of the Transvaal. Not many people demanded that the war be stopped immediately. Discussion shifted to the administration of the war or the terms of the final settlement. Thus anti-war feeling could be dramatically silenced from mid-October onwards.

Before the Boer attack, the most numerous group of anti-war resolutions came from mainly Nonconformist religious bodies. There were one hundred and twenty-seven Nonconformist resolutions and twenty-one from Quakers forwarded to the Colonial Office. Together these were more than a quarter of the total resolutions, one third of all resolutions up to the outbreak of war, and over one half of all the peace resolutions. Almost half came from the north of England and they were thus typical of the

resolutions as a whole. Fifteen came from Wales and a few more from groups of Welsh Nonconformists living in England, but there were only two from Scotland, -reflecting the more "established" nature of the Scottish Churches and their greater preoccupation with African missionary interests. It had never been forgotten that there had been mutual animosity between Livingstone and the Boers.

Fourteen of the resolutions were from Baptist Churches, twenty-eight from Congregationalist Churches, twenty-four from meetings of Free Church Councils, twenty-seven from Methodist Churches, ⁽¹⁾ and thirty-four from miscellaneous denominations such as Unitarians, Calvinistic Methodists, Sunday School and Christian Endeavour Societies.

The extra twenty-eight Nonconformist resolutions, not sent to the Colonial Office, substantiate this pattern of distribution among the denominations.

Many resolutions were passed at gatherings representing large numbers of people, - the Primitive Methodists at

(1) These broke down as: - 11 from Primitive Methodists,
9 from Free Independent Methodists,
2 from Methodist New Connexion,
5 from Wesleyan Methodists.

Manchester claimed to speak for eleven thousand members and thirty-two thousand adherents, while the Methodist Free Church of Wales represented ten thousand members.

The Nonconformist resolutions were very similar in content. Many began by sympathising with Uitlander problems, but did not think that these were sufficient justification for war. They showed little sympathy on the other hand with Kruger or the Boers. The influence of the Hague Disarmament Conference which had just finished, was strong; many resolution specifically mentioned arbitration as a remedy for Anglo-Boer disagreements, and a number of others recommended further negotiations, diplomacy or just "peaceful means". They did not analyse the economic situation in the Transvaal or the importance of the gold mines (an obvious point for radical and labour resolutions), or deal with the suzerainty aspect of the whole affair. They were thus in one sense missing the point, since the issue was not just a franchise grievance but concerned the future of South Africa and indirectly that of the British Empire. The resolutions reflected the old Gladstonian principles of international

morality, fair dealing and respect for the rights of small nations.

There was a real division in Methodist opinion due to Wesleyan Methodist addiction to an Imperialist point of view. W.T. Stead summed up the situation when he said that two thirds of Nonconformists were soundly anti-war but Price Hughes "has had an evil influence." (1)

Hugh Price Hughes, paradoxically was one of the more advanced Evangelicals as far as Church reform went, but was also violently anti-Boer. He had been converted to Imperialism over Egypt in 1885, - his comment on seeing a British soldier in Alexandria in 1900 was "the wretched Egyptians have at last attained something approaching happiness in this world. Everywhere justice and the Pax Britannia!" (2)

His attitude to South Africa was moulded by a belief in the destiny of the British race to be supreme, a dislike of foreigners and a view of Methodism as an imperial religion which could play a leading role in an Anglo-Saxon federation. (3) He wrote

(1) Campbell-Bannerman MSS. ADD.MSS. 41,211, W.T. Stead to James Bryce, 30th September 1899.

(2) Dorothea Price Hughes, Life of Hugh Price Hughes, London 1904, p.550.

(3) Ibid.

"Wesleyan Methodism is an Imperial body..Methodism is in a pre-eminent degree the religion of the English speaking world." (1)

Wesleyan Imperialism could be attributed to the large numbers of Wesleyans in the colonies and the armed forces. (2)

A more important factor was probably the Tory background of the Wesleyans in the earlier part of the century. Hughes subscribed to the Dutch conspiracy theory, and a controversy between him and another correspondent to the Methodist Times was carried on throughout the Summer.

Wesleyan Methodists were by no means unanimously behind Hughes, but anti-war resolutions which were put forward tended to be defeated, - a petition against the war put forward at the Wesleyan Church in Whitby was so strongly opposed by ship-owners and county councillors that it had to be withdrawn. (3)

The small number of Wesleyan resolutions contrasts with the greater amount from Primitive Methodists, though in 1900 the Wesleyans numbered twice as many members as the Primitive Methodists. (4)

(1) Methodist Times, 12th October 1899.

(2) See Arbitrator, December 1899.

(3) Methodist Times, 21st September 1899.

(4) R.F. Wearmouth, Methodism and the struggle of the working class, 1850-1900, pp.98-101.

The Baptist and Congregationalists magazines at first took fairly firm anti-war attitudes. The editorial in the Baptist in July declared "All talk of war in the circumstances is sheer wickedness...England will, so far at any rate, as the Free Churches can influence her stand for morality in international affairs." (1) By these high standards a part of the Nonconformist conscience moved sluggishly. At the Baptist Union meeting, the resolution was very moderately worded in order "to avoid strife in the Assembly", (2) and referred to the magnanimity with which Britain had treated the Transvaal in 1881. And after the outbreak of war the Baptist quickly compromised, "We must in the presence of the urgent considerations about us be patriots, but let us be Christian patriots," (3)

The resolution passed by the National Executive of the Free Church Council on 3rd October was thought by many Nonconformists to be inadequate, - W.M. Crook the

(1) Baptist, 7th July 1899.

(2) Ibid, 29th September 1899.

(3) Ibid, 20th October 1899.

editor of the Echo, abstained from voting on the grounds of its ineffectiveness. It combined sympathy for the Uitlanders with a call for arbitration. (1)

J.G. Rogers who voted for this resolution was found after the outbreak of war, writing that the Boers were partly to blame, and urging the Liberals to close their ranks and resume the controversy after the war had been won. (2) But the Congregationalist magazine the Independent had even before war broke out accepted the superiority of the British in Africa, "which shall triumph, the progressive Briton or the reactionary Boer, the higher civilization or the lesser?" (3) There was no doubt as to the most desirable result, though British dominance should be obtained ideally by peaceful means. In addition some Nonconformists contrasted Boer treatment of the natives unfavourably with that of the British, - though this argument was much less prevalent

(1) Independent, 5th October 1899.

(2) Ibid, 19th October 1899.

(3) Ibid, 5th October 1899.

than it had been in 1881. No doubt there had been a decline in humanitarian feelings towards natives and the actions of the South Africa Company and the Cape Government did not provide a very satisfactory picture of the British treatment of the coloured inhabitants of South Africa.

After war broke out many of the Nonconformists dropped their peace principles. At a Baptist meeting in London at which Sir Hugh Reid spoke "there was not a sound of dissent when he spoke of the "ignorant, impudent and intolerable form in which war had been declared on this country." Mr. Greenough "amid murmurs of agreement" said Baptists had never been for peace at any price." (1)

Even before the war started, some of the Nonconformist resolutions had not been passed unanimously. At the meeting of the Tunstall, West Midlands and Shrewsbury district association of Primitive Methodists, the anti-war resolution was frequently interrupted and only passed in a modified form. (2) A minister proposing a peace

(1) British Weekly, 26th October 1899.

(2) Reynolds Newspaper, 1st October 1899.

resolution at a Heaton Mersey Congregationalist Church said that those who disagreed has better stay away; a correspondent to the Pall Mall Gazette reported that as a Liberal Unionist he followed this advice, with the result that the resolution passed unanimously. (1)

The Nonconformist resolutions reflect mainly middle class and lower middle class opinion. In spite of home mission movements, Nonconformist had not achieved any great success by 1900, in attracting working men to their churches. The lack of working class adherents was a constant source of complaint to Nonconformists. (2) The working class was possibly more highly represented in resolution from Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, Adult Schools and Christian Endeavour Societies.

Working class participation in Quaker resolutions was greater since six out of twenty one resolutions came from Adult Schools said to be composed of working men and women. The rest came from meetings, mainly local monthly meetings of Friends. Yorkshire sent eight of

(1) Pall Mall Gazette, 2nd October 1899.

(2) See K.S. Inglis, Churches and the working classes in Victorian England, London 1964, p.99.

the Quaker resolutions and here the Rowntree family played an important part, - two public meetings at Thirsk and Scarborough were chaired by George Rowntree and Joshua Rowntree spoke at these, as well as at a York meeting. The Birmingham Transvaal Committee emerged from the Friends Summer School held in that town, and was encouraged by local Quakers such as George Tangye and W.A. Albright.

Among Quaker M.Ps. J.E. Ellis was the most firmly opposed to the war. A.E. Pease the Liberal M.P. for Cleveland (Yorkshire), was reported to be anti-war, though he had always been inclined to favour "a just extension of British influence." (1) His brother Joseph A. Pease, Liberal M.P. for Tyneside, was more anti-Imperialist, but their father J.W. Pease, Liberal M.P. for Castle Barnard, though he began by deploring the war, took up a very anti-Boer attitude after the ultimatum. (2) Herbert Pike Pease as a Liberal Unionist, of course favoured the war. (3)

(1) Star, 30th September 1899.

(2) War against War, 12th October 1899.

(3) A.E. Pease, Elections and Recollections, op cit.

The pacifist tradition of the Society of Friends was most strongly expressed in the Friends Peace Committee, which included members of local peace associations. The first requests to the Meeting for S offerings to take some anti-war action, failed. In September a moderate memorial was sent to the Government, but as in 1882-5 the most definite action was taken at the local meetings. (1) Resolutions were sent from Friends at Yeaton, North Warwickshire, Oxford, Liverpool and Nottingham.

Some work was also done by local peace associations which contained Quakers. The Wisbech Peace Association sent a resolution to the Government, approached local Nonconformist ministers and persuaded them to bring a similar resolution before their congregations. (2)

The Colchester Peace Association, whose secretary was also a member of the Friends Peace Committee, sent two resolutions to the Government, each with a collection of signatures, issued a circular to local ministers and literature against war to the local Sunday School Union. (3)

(1) Friend, 13th October 1899.

(2) Ibid, 22nd September 1899.

(3) Society of Friends MSS. S 102, Minute Book of the Peace Committee, Report of Colchester Local Peace Association.

Friends were divided on the war. Those Friends who were Unionists tended to justify the conflict by reference to the prospect of better government in South Africa and improved treatment for the natives. ⁽¹⁾ They did not represent the general opinions of Quakers, but even without the division on party lines, there was a growing awareness of Imperial commitments among Friends. The value of expansion had already been shown to those Friends who were members of the Anti-Slavery Society, but a more general trend towards Imperialism began to percolate the writings of the Society. A significant article in the Friends Quarterly Review, ⁽²⁾ wrote, "Our beloved society has been ...somewhat parochial in its sympathies...thinking of England as men thought of her in the sixties...beyond the limits of the London Yearly Meeting, events are on the march ! the puritan temperament is not necessarily inhospitable to great ideas, and in 10,000 pure, evangelical middle-class homes mail day is never forgotten and the arrival of those narrow

(1) M.E. Hirst, Friends in peace and war, London 1923, p.482.

(2) January 1899.

crumple envelopes, dark with colonial or Indian postmarks, is hungrily awaited. To these firm-lipped Free Churchmen and their far-away sons, "England" stands for the world wide realm, the phenomenon unparalleled in history, unforeseen by our fathers and but half realised by ourselves...there have been mistakes and some evil doing but broadly speaking our race has little to blush for in the record of the past ten years." This was a Quaker adaptation of the Imperialist awareness so prevalent by this time. Quakers were beginning to move from Little Englandism to a position of "moral" Imperialism; in this context the Boer War might stand out as an anomaly, an example of the occasional evil doing to be found in the best of Imperialisms. The difficult position of Friends is summed up in an editorial in the Friend which condemned the diplomacy leading to the war, took an ultra objective stand between Boer and British, but drew attention to "the outstanding fact that the vast influences for good of our British Empire are a great trust at the hands of God that we cannot lay aside..." (1) Quaker opinion like

(1) 12th January 1900.

that of the Nonconformists cannot be seen as straightforward, unequivocal opposition to Imperialism, even in the pre-war months.

The Church of England predictably had no doubts as to the justice of the British cause. The Church Times left no doubt of its anti-Boer feelings, Kruger was a "wily potentate" with a "crooked and shifty policy" and the Boers had indulged in "years of patient scheming for the overthrow of British supremacy." (1) Some Bishops suggested a prayer for the success of British troops and the Church Times provided a litany. Once war had begun the ecclesiastical world was not slow to discover advantages, - "It is agreed on all hands that war is a dreadful thing, but there is this to be said on the other side, that it calls forth the exercise of many of the higher qualities in the human character." (2) There was a general addiction to militarism in the Church of England which was largely absent in Nonconformism. Canon Newbolt in St. Paul's remarked "We must let the beauty of war, its

(1) Church Times, 14th July, 21st July, 20th October 1899.

(2) Ibid., 27th October 1899.

heroism, and its wonderful virtues, balance the pain and horror." (1) The Boers were compared to Lucifer and

his fallen angels carrying on a cunning and deceitful warfare against the forces of right. (2) The Vicar of Edgbaston parish church saw the army as the instrument of "the God of battles", and followed this up with a

reminder of Britain's special mission to colonise the world. (3) The Vicar of St, Austell explained, "God

has given us a capacity which he had denied to them...the

English race has a perfect genius for colonization...And

this is why He designs as I believe, that we should be

paramount in Africa." (4) The Church of England played

a special role in representing Imperialist expansion as

the will of God.

If further inducement to Imperialism was needed it was supplied by the missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; the Bishop of the Pretoria

(1) Quoted in Alfred Marks, The Churches and the South African War, London 1905, p.15.

(2) Ibid, p.17, sermon by Dr. Powell, Vicar of St. Paul's Maidstone.

(3) England's Mission, a war sermon by Rev. A.G. Lloyd, curate of St. Mary and St. Ambrose in Edgbaston Parish Church.

(4) Three Plain Sermons for the Day of Intercession, preached on 11th February 1900, by Rev. Canon Hammond, Vicar of St. Austell.

diocese who had never become reconciled to the settlement of 1881, sent home descriptions of "ignorant, sometimes barely civilized, semi-savage, Boer farmers....they are deceitful and untrustworthy to an extent impossible for an English man, much less gentleman, to conceive." (1)

There were one or two individual exceptions to this aggressive stand. Canon Hicks belonged to the Manchester Transvaal Committee and the Dean of Durham, Dean of Lincoln and the Bishop of Hereford to the South African Conciliation Committee. But they were a minority in the Church of England.

After the Nonconformist resolution the largest section of anti-war declarations came from Liberal and Radical Associations. Forty-three resolutions were sent to the Colonial Office. There was only one resolution from a Liberal Association in favour of Government policy, - from Portsmouth Liberal and Radical Association. About one third of the resolutions were from Womens Liberal Associations. There were none from Scotland, though a number of Scottish Liberal M.Ps. opposed the war. But the Liberal Imperialists Asquith and Haldane held Scottish seats and Rosebery of

(1) S.P.G. MSS. Letters from Pretoria Diocese.

course was a Scottish aristocrat. Parliament did not meet until after war had broken out, without the aid of division figures it is difficult to estimate the number of Liberal M.Ps. who took an anti-war stand. From the expression of opinion in the constituencies, (1) it is likely that most of them were anti-war up to October 11th, though with varying degrees of sympathy for the Uitlanders.

Harcourt and Morley were the nominal leaders of the anti-Imperialist section of the Liberal Party. But Harcourt had more or less given up active participation in politics when he retired from the leadership in December 1898. Morley, after his outstandingly rhetorical Manchester anti-war speech, did little for the peace party. In the hard core of anti-Imperialists G.B. Clark was prominent; (2) he took a particularly pro-Boer line, claiming that the Uitlanders had no substantial complaints, - "A great many of the people who went to the Transvaal thought they would find there

(1) I have located 71 Liberal anti-war resolutions altogether, both in the C.O. files and the press.

(2) M.P. for Caithness. He had a special interest in the Boer case as he was an agent of the Transvaal in 1887.

all the comforts and conveniences of Picadilly, and all the conditions under which they lived at home, and this not being the case they were dissatisfied, but if they had gone to America or to any other country of the same character, they would have found things very similar." (1)

Clark was indefatigable in the London peace organisation and in addressing anti-war meetings. Also involved in peace activity in the Summer of 1899, were, Labouchere, J.E. Ellis, H.J. Wilson, F. Maddison and C.P. Scott. (2) They were joined by group of Lib-Labs from the North-east led by Thomas Burt and a group of London Radical M.P.s - John Burns, W. Steadman, T. Pickersgill and T. Lough. Lloyd George and Byrn Roberts in Wales were noted for their anti-war stand.

Outside Parliament was W.T. Stead who on this occasion reversed his usual Imperialist stand, - he believed that federation of South Africa could only be achieved by gradualist peaceful methods. (3) There were also two Liberal editors, W.M. Crook of the Echo

(1) Published speech at St. Martin's Town Hall 10th July 1899.

(2) M.P. for Leigh in Lancashire and editor of the Manchester Guardian.

(3) See Canadian Historical Review, 1959, J.O. Baylen, "W.T. Stead and the Boer War", pp. 304-314.

and W.M. Massingham of the Daily Chronicle. (1) Liberals of the Chronicle proposed a watching committee of the type of the later Conciliation Committee at the end of August 1899. (2) In London the Liberal Forwards Committee took the lead in forming an anti-war organisation. (3) The officials of the National Reform Union sent a circular to their branches urging them to protest against war. (4) Liberals were also at work in the peace associations and the Nonconformist churches.

Not all Liberals were as unambiguous on the Transvaal situation as Clark. James Bryce, who was regarded as member of the anti-war group, was not unaware of the Uitlander problems and not uncritical of the Boers, - "Living in the open air and mostly in the saddle, they are strangely ignorant and old fashioned in all their ideas..." (5) He saw the issue in South Africa clearly, -

(1) Massingham like Crook was a Nonconformist, his father was a Methodist preacher. He was forced to resign from the editorship of the Daily Chronicle in November 1899 on account of his anti-war views. He later joined the Labour Party. Crook was also forced to resign from the Echo by the end of 1899.

(2) Courtney MSS. Vol 8, Courtney to Morley 1st September 1899.

(3) Star, 21st June 1899.

(4) Ibid, 30th August 1899.

(5) James Bryce, Impressions of South Africa, London 1st edition 1897, p.508.

"There has been a collision of two types of civilization one belonging to the nineteenth century and the other to the seventeenth century," (1) There could be little dispute as to which was destined to be supreme, though the ideal solution would be the peaceful confederation of all states in South Africa.

Not all the Parliamentary anti-war party were Liberals or Nationalists. Leonard Courtney, Liberal Unionist M.P. for E. Cornwall, was an active opponent of the war. Two Conservative M.Ps., Edward Clarke (Plymouth) and Maclean (Cardiff) took an anti-Government stand. None of these three survived the displeasure of their constituents, to stand in the General Election of 1900.

The geographical distribution of the Liberal resolutions sent to the Colonial Office did not completely coincide with the incidence of anti-war M.Ps. Fifteen for instance came from Lancashire, though the Liberal M.Ps. here, except for Scott and Philip Stanhope (Burnley) were fairly non-committal about the war. Lancashire, the seat of strong working class Conservatism in the towns, sent one hundred and seventeen resolutions to the Colonial

(1) Ibid, p.571.

Office, the majority of which, surprisingly, were anti-war. There were fourteen Liberal resolutions from Yorkshire, in this case reflecting a higher level of anti-war activity, - six were from Sheffield or its environs and could be attributed to the influence of the anti-war campaign led by H.J. Wilson M.P. Six resolutions came from the half dozen counties of the south-west. There were five from Wales, including one from the Welsh Liberal Convention on the proposal of Carnarvon Association. (1) Only two resolutions came from the north-east where the influence of Miners' M.Ps. in the rural areas was counteracted by the Imperialism of the larger towns.

Some resolutions passed against minority opposition. At Lancaster the resolution was opposed by two well-known Liberals, a councillor and an ex-President of the Reform Club. (2) At a Wrexham meeting against the war, a prominent East Denbighshire Liberal declared his opposition to the resolution, - an amendment was in fact carried by a large majority at this meeting. (3)

(1) Liverpool Courier, 29th September 1899.

(2) Ibid, 2nd October 1899.

(3) Manchester Guardian, 3rd October 1899.

In content the Liberal resolutions were often indistinguishable from the Nonconformist ones. A few were couched in stronger terms and condemned the activity of the Government and the press, in forcing warlike attitudes. Four resolutions paralleled those from Labour organisations in drawing attention to the financial motives for war, and in suggesting the contradiction between Imperial aggression and social reform at home.

A more detailed picture of grass roots Liberalism can be obtained by looking at events in Sheffield where a good deal of opposition to the war was mobilised, Newcastle-on-Tyne where Liberals were sharply split over the issue, and Leicester which perhaps represents the more typical Liberal response.

Sheffield politics were to some extent dominated by H.J. Wilson, who owned a local smelting works and had played a large part in local politics since 1870, though since 1885 he had been M.P. for Holmfirth, a county constituency to the north of Sheffield. He was known for his strong Nonconformist and Temperance opinions. The position in the Sheffield constituencies reinforced his

influence. The Eccleshall, Hallam and Central divisions were Conservative, and the two predominantly working class constituencies of Brightside and Attercliffe, Liberal. In 1897 the distinguished Brightside M.P., A.J. Mundella, was succeeded by Frederick Maddison who was relatively new in Sheffield and though he opposed the war, could not hope to have Wilson's standing. The Attercliffe M.P. B. Langley was more cautious on the war, and was one of the few Liberal M.Ps. to be returned unopposed in 1900. Socialism in Sheffield was weak "...despite the formation in 1893 of a small but active I.L.P. and the subtle influence of Edward Carpenter." (1) On the City Council the Lib-Labs usually obeyed the Liberal whip. (2) At the end of June 1899, two delegates from the I.L.P. National Administrative Council visited Sheffield and began to form a Sheffield Socialist Society. (3) But this seems to have played little part in the peace movement.

Wilson first rallied Sheffield Liberals at a

(1) Sidney Pollard, Sheffield Trades and Labour Council 1858-1958, p.44.

(2) Ibid, p.46.

(3) I.L.P. National Administrative Council Minute Book 1899-1902, British Library of Political Science, minutes of meeting held 3rd July 1899.

meeting in the Temperance Hall on 30th September, which he chaired. The thirteen hundred members of the five Liberal Councils had been invited to attend. (1) At this meeting a moderate anti-war resolution was passed and a telegram sent to Kruger urging him to accept the peace terms offered by the Government. However it did not pass without opposition, - an amendment was put by J.B. Hobman, a member of the Liberal Council for Central division, deprecating the creation of dissension among Liberals. It was an interesting point that Hobman was also a member of the staff of the Sheffield Independent, a newspaper with which Wilson had a long standing feud dating from 1874 when he had initiated the Sheffield Reform Association as a break away group from the "official" Liberalism which the Independent claimed to represent. (2) Wilson had tried to get Hobman removed from the meeting as a reporter. In the end however only five Liberals out of the one hundred and fifty five present voted for the amendment. (3) The fact that only a small minority of those Liberals invited

(1) H.J. Wilson MSS. Sheffield Central Library, M.D. 2506, Diary of events 1899-1902, compiled by Claude Moore, (a Sheffield election agent), in 1908, using Wilson's Diary, Moore's Diary, newspapers and leaflets.

(2) W.S. Fowler, A study in radicalism and dissent, the life and times of H.J. Wilson, London 1961.

(3) Wilson MSS. M.D. 2506.

to the meeting actually attended, may indicate some opposition to Wilson's view of the South African situation.

However the anti-war Liberals consolidated their victory by holding a meeting three days later at the Reform Club to take action on the war. ⁽¹⁾ Seventy Liberals opposed to the war were invited to the house of Wilson's brother J. Wycliffe Wilson, on 7th October, - thirty of them attended. ⁽²⁾ It was decided to hold a public meeting but as no first rate speaker could be obtained at such short notice the idea was abandoned in favour of holding a series of smaller meetings at local Liberal clubs. ⁽³⁾ Anti-war resolutions were passed at Liberal clubs in Brightside, Upperthorpe and Attercliffe, though a hostile amendment was carried at Darnell. ⁽⁴⁾ Meanwhile, Maddison and Percy Rawson a Nonconformist minister, spoke against the war to Pleasant Sunday Afternoons and other religious meetings. ⁽⁵⁾

(1) Ibid.

(2) M.D. 2521, circulars and letters 1899-1900.

(3) Ibid.

(4) M.D. 2506.

(5) M.D. 2521.

Wilson also spoke at public meetings at St. Martins Town Hall in London, at Ashton-under-Lyne and Pendlebury. (1)

He took a typically moral attitude, - we had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal, war would be a crime against humanity and against international morality. (2)

After war broke out divisions in Sheffield Liberalism became more obvious. Charlotte Wilson invited a number of Liberals not converted to an anti-war stand, to breakfast at the Wilson home at Osgathorpe on 22nd November. (3) Three replies are indicative of the attitudes of some Liberals once war had begun. John Clegg regretted the airing of Liberal divisions in public; William Longbottom thought the immediate problem was to win the war as quickly as possible; while William Clegg (late Lord Mayor of Sheffield who was asked to contest the Eccleshall constituency in 1900), wrote that his views were basically the same as Lord Rosebery's and no useful purpose would therefore be served by discussion. (4) At a meeting of December of "Transvaal

(1) M.D. 2506.

(2) see letter in M.D. 2521.

(3) Ibid.

(4) M.D. 2520. replies to the Liberal breakfast in 1899.

stalwarts" only seventeen Liberals were present out of twenty-seven invited. (1) Leaving aside the small group of implacably anti-war Liberals, the remainder fell into two categories, - those who could be described as Liberal Imperialists and whose views on South Africa differed little from those of Conservatives, and those who were shaken by the Boer ultimatum into agreeing that the Boers must be defeated and who were also anxious to disguise the splits in the Liberal Party; many Liberals no doubt were prepared to stifle their mistrust of Imperialist foreign policy for the sake of unanimity in the Liberal Party.

Both Wilson and Maddison justifying their opinions to their constituents were careful to take a moderate line, not only denying that they were pro-Boers but not advocating peace until the Boers had at least been driven back into their own territory. (2) Maddison went further towards the Imperialist position than Wilson by declaring that no settlement should be reached until the

(1) M.D. 2521.

(2) M.D. 2506, & MD. 2527, - printed account of Maddison's meeting at Burngreave Vestry Hall, 21st November 1899.

M.D. 2520, printed account of Wilson's speech to Holmfirth Divisional Council at Penistone on 20th January 1900.

Boers had been defeated. He also illustrated the extent to which Imperialism had permeated the Liberal Party by stating that he stood for true Imperialism against the false variety. However he justified his right to oppose the Government by voting for hostile amendments. A vote of confidence was carried by a large majority though there was a good deal of interruption from the back of the hall. (1) Wilson in his speech admitted that there was a division of opinion in the constituency, - mainly mining and rural, on the war. Comments from the floor indicated a variety of views, - there was the usual condemnation of the Transvaal franchise laws, countered by a reference to the inadequate franchise in Britain, some support for the Boer conspiracy theory, and attacks on Boer conservatism and backwardness. (2)

In spite of Wilson's efforts, backed by Maddison, Liberals in Sheffield were still divided on the war. These divisions were present even before the war broke out though the peace party were not challenged in this period; they became more apparent afterwards and even

(1) M.D. 2527, op cit.

(2) MD. 2520, op cit.

more marked in 1900 when Maddison lost his seat and Wilson's majority was reduced. Although both constituencies had predominantly working class electorates, the two M.Ps. were still in advance of the rank and file as far as anti-Imperialism goes.

In Newcastle there was before the war began, a determined section of Imperialists among the Liberals. The splits in Newcastle Liberalism went back to the 1880's when Joseph Cowen had come into conflict with the local Liberal organisation. Cowen though long retired from politics, predictably approved of the Boer War, - "We are fighting to prevent men of British blood from being treated as "helots" on British territory by a sordid oligarchy, which British arms saved from extinction and British generosity endowed with autonomy. We want racial equality. The Boers want racial ascendancy. That's the difference." (1) By 1899 the Liberals had lost much of their power in Newcastle which was represented by two Conservatives. Also in 1885, Cowen had waged his battle with the anti-Imperialist

(1) William Duncan, Op cit, p.215.

official Liberals, but by 1899 many of the Liberal establishment had swung over to an Imperialist position. At a debate at Newcastle Liberal Club in July, Spence Watson and the two miners' M.Ps, Thomas Burt and Charles Fenwick, found themselves opposed by a number of local Liberal councillors who thought "The Boers were, the biggest bullies in existence. Only when coerced would they give way (hear hear)... The Liberal Party used to sympathise with oppressed peoples.." (1) This point of view summed up the dilemma of the Liberals. How could they support an oligarchic and reactionary Government in the Transvaal against Uitlanders who were agitating for the right to vote, - a basic Liberal freedom. A writer in the Contemporary Review developed this approach by asserting that a Radical living in the Transvaal would be bound to agitate for the franchise, and the Boers were "A prime old Tory oligarchy..levying taxation and denying representation." (2)

The Imperial South African Association was also strong in the north-east and held a meeting in Newcastle

(1) Newcastle Daily Chronicle, 11th July 1899.

(2) Contemporary Review, January 1900, A.R. Corman, "Radicalism and the Imperial spirit", pps. 18-26.

Town Hall at the beginning of July, presided over by Albert Gray, a director of the South African Company and a former administrator in Rhodesia, at which a local Liberal alderman, Michael Dodd spoke in favour of the resolution. (1)

A further factor in the situation was that Dodd was the brother of one of the Johannesburg reform leaders, who arrived in England a few days later to begin a speaking tour. He was described as "well known in the north of England as an earnest radical and has been an earnest worker in the Liberal cause." (2)

He spoke at a series of meetings at Sunderland, South Shields, Blyth, Lemington, Beaton Delavel, North Shields and Newcastle, and in most cases both Liberals and Tories were on the platform. (3) The meeting at Lemington was in fact held at the request of the Liberal Association there. (4)

The meetings were organised by the I.S.A.A. at whose request Dodd had come to England, and the standard Milner resolution was passed at all of them.

(1) Newcastle Daily Chronicle, 3rd July 1899.

(2) Ibid, 21st July 1899.

(3) Ibid, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th July 1899.

(4) Ibid, 4th August 1899.

Peace meetings in Newcastle were impossible. A meeting organised by Spence Watson and the miners' leaders was called off owing to a rumour that war had broken out, and the second meeting held on 11th October was broken up by a patriotic mob. When the first meeting was abandoned, an impromptu pro-Government demonstration was held in the market square at which two members of the Liberal Association proposed and seconded a patriotic resolution. (1) The chairman of West Hartlepool Liberal Association expressed a usual view when he said "that like many other Liberals he was a strong supporter of the Government in the present crisis." (2)

The attitudes of the mining villages are more doubtful. Miners were reported to have attended many of the Milner meetings, (3) and may have felt some sympathy with their fellow miners in South Africa, but the miners' leaders were certainly opposed to the war.

The presence of Dodd who brought first hand

(1) Ibid. 6th October 1899.

(2) Ibid. 11th October 1899.

(3) See resolutions in C.O. 417/277.

information on the Transvaal, was a special factor in the Newcastle situation, and helped to account for the Imperialist attitudes of his friends in Newcastle Liberalism. But there was as well a tendency towards Liberal Imperialism in Newcastle before the war broke out. Its influence can be seen in the selection of Captain Lambert to contest the constituency in 1900; he was serving in the Transvaal and was the only candidate to receive a letter of support from Rosebery.

In Leicester the Liberal Association made a token protest against the war-mongering of the Government, but were doubtful about taking more positive anti-war action. On the request of ten committee members, the Liberal Council met on 6th October to "consider the attitude of this country towards the Transvaal." The meeting played safe by adopting the National Liberal Federation resolution which stated that the South African situation did not justify war, and regretted the intrusion of the supremacy issue into the dispute over the franchise. (1) When it was suggested that the Liberal Party might co-operate with other Leicester organisations to hold a peace meeting

(1) Minutes of Leicester Liberal Association, meeting held 6th October 1899.

there was some objection. This was over-ruled at the general meeting, but the Finance and General Purposes Committee later decided not to contribute towards the expense of a meeting, though contact was to be made with the Free Church Council, the I.L.P. and the Peace Association. (1)

The meeting did not take place, possibly because war broke out soon afterwards.

Besides these examples there is plenty of impressionistic evidence on Liberal attitudes before and after the outbreak of war. Frederick Harrison, who saw the Liberal Party ideally as the personification of Gladstonian principles urged Morley to break away from the leadership, - "...you would start a new Midlothian campaign and force the official Liberals to join you. There is a splendid opening for the right hand of the Old Man." (2) But no such revolt occurred, and opposition to the war was mainly undertaken by back-bench M.Ps. who had never held ministerial position. This factor may have paralysed the exertions of a number

(1) Ibid, meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, 9th October 1899.

(2) Frederick Harrison MSS. Harrison to Morley, 31st August 1899.

of Liberals in the constituencies. Bryce wrote on 21st September, "The large majority (of Liberals) seem opposed to any idea of war, but puzzled by the whole affair, not clear how to answer those who say that British paramountcy must be maintained, and anxious to have a lead from their leaders." (1) No lead was forthcoming. The argument that the Uitlanders should have the franchise was difficult to refute; Blunt saw this as the central factor, - "the pretext of demanding the franchise for the Outlanders in the Transvaal was a trap laid by Milner, especially for Morley and the Radicals who stepped into it precisely as was intended. Once having approved the demand it was impossible for those with any logic to disapprove the military steps taken to enforce the demands on Kruger and war became a necessity." (2) But most Liberals were clear that the Uitlanders demands should not be obtained by war. They were more likely as Bryce suggested to be confused by the paramountcy aspects. By the end of September

(1) Campbell-Bannerman MSS. ADD.MSS. 41,211, Bryce to Campbell-Bannerman, 21st September 1899.

(2) W.S. Blunt, Diaries, Vol 1, p.405.

Bryce was still substantially of the same opinion, -
 "So far as I can judge...the large majority think no
 case has yet been shown for war and will disapprove of
 it unless the Boers pointedly refuse any redress or
 take the offensive. There may however be a certain
 number of dissentients." (1) Channing took for
 granted the fact that there would be divisions of
 opinion among his Northants constituents, - "I could
 not expect that all my constituents would see eye to
 eye with me on these problems. But from the first there
 was a disposition to agree and to put a generous
 interpretation on opinions they know were sincere." (2)

Other Liberals however thought that Liberals were
 unanimous against the impending war. A correspondent
 of Bryce wrote on 10th October "I am pained to know that
 you think there is such division of opinion in the
 Liberal Party. Amongst the men and the types of men
 who were against Gladstone in '78 and '79 only, do I
 find any wavering, - of the soundness of the overwhelming

(1) Herbert Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS. 46,019, Bryce to
 Gladstone, 29th September 1899.

(2) Bryce MSS. Bodleian Library, Box on South African War,
 J. Roberts to Bryce, 10th October 1899.

majority of earnest working men in London, Bedford and North Wales, where I have lately been, I have no doubt. I can only find one feeling." (1) The emphasis was on the fact that Liberal voters of the working classes were solidly opposed to the war, - Labouchere wrote, "The country is in the main against the war, - certainly the working classes are. Paul told me he addressed a day or two ago, the Liberal Council at Birmingham. He went against the war, but he found that his audience were more against it than he was." (2) Liberal observers were of course noting events in different parts of the country. The disparity in their views may be explained by the fact that superficially most Liberals would be bound to think that the South African situation did not justify a war, and would condemn the diplomacy of the Government; but on deeper analysis all varieties of pro- and anti-Boerism and support for Imperial expansion would be found.

(1) Bryce MSS. Bodleian Library, Box on South African War, J. Roberts to Bryce, 10th October 1899.

(2) Herbert Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS. 46,016, Labouchere to Gladstone, 12th October 1899.

If some Liberals vacillated before war broke out, they were certainly on the defensive afterwards. Labouchere attributed their apathy to a belief that the war would be a military promenade, - if they had realised its long duration, they would have "come out of their shells." (1)

Liberals participated in the general feeling that the immediate task was to bring the war to an end; as the Star put it the day after war broke out, "They have a heavy indictment to bring against the ministry in respect of its policy before the war.

But that indictment must be pigeonholed until the war is over." (2)

The Star later changed its mind as to the advisability of criticizing the Government, but the early Boer victories, while pointing to the fact that the war would last longer than expected, made it difficult for Liberals to move against the rise of emotional patriotism without being regarded as traitors.

The National Liberal Federation, whose executive in September had disassociated the Liberal Party from

(1) Campbell-Bannerman MSS. ADD.MSS. 41,222, Labouchere to Campbell-Bannerman 22nd December 1899.

(2) Star, 12th October 1899.

responsibility for the war, in December decided by a majority in the General Committee, that although the war could have been avoided it must be pushed to a successful conclusion. An attempt to leave out the last part failed, and the resolution passed with five dissentients. (1)

At the beginning of November Edward Russell the editor of the Liverpool Post wrote of the average Lancashire Liberal, "(he) is at present very anti-Boer, very much persuaded that war was inevitable, not much thinking of the badness of the negotiations, deeply impressed with the evidently great and long arranged military preparations of the Transvaal." (2) Liverpool had not been a place where the peace movement had made much headway, - it was strongly Conservative, - but there had been a substantial number of anti-war resolutions from Lancashire before the outbreak of war. The Boer ultimatum seemed to have made a great impression here. Russell himself was a good example of a moderate

(1) Ibid, 14th December 1899.

(2) Campbell-Bannerman MSS. ADD.MSS. 41,235, Edward Russell to Campbell-Bannerman, 3rd November 1899.

or "sane" Imperialist, - he wrote to Asquith, "The only consolation I have is a paradox; that whenever we conquer and whatever we acquire, it turns out for the good of the world...Altogether this vulgar and howling period is to me a time of great misery....I have never been with Morley and Lawson in any of their opposition to what has been done by this country." (1)

The chief Scottish Whip, Munro Ferguson informed Campbell-Bannerman, "The party as you know is split, but I believe that the greater part of it, perhaps three-quarters, especially those who don't talk, support the war, without inquiring very deeply into its causes." (2) He advised candidates in Scotland not to risk holding meetings after the outbreak of war, but Bryce found that Liberals in Aberdeen could still be swayed by a persuasive anti-war case, - "Pirie" (3) and I have both addressed large Liberal Ward meetings and have both taken the bull by the horns. We had no dissent expressed. A considerable section seemed rather surprised at our condemnation of

(1) Ibid, copy of a letter sent to Asquith, 29th November 1899.

(2) Campbell-Bannerman MSS. ADD.MSS. 41,222. R. Munro Ferguson to Campbell-Bannerman, 8th November 1899.

(3) Pirie was the other Aberdeen H.P.

the Government's diplomacy, but it seemed to me that this was largely due to the fact that they had heard only the Government's side, - the papers here being violently on that side, and as the meeting went on, they came round more and more, tho' I will not say that all were convinced." An usual "the working men are better than the shopkeepers," (1)

Attitudes in the Bow and Bromley bye-election at the end of October, illustrate the ways in which Liberal opinion had been modified after the outbreak of war. The Liberal candidate was Harold Spender, who on 6th October, had attempted to organise a peace meeting under the auspices of the Liberal Association, which had however been broken up. Spender, though accused by Sydney Buxton, another London Liberal M.P., of ruining his chances by standing as an anti-war candidate, in fact took an extremely cautious position. While convinced that the war had begun as a result of a diplomatic blunder and would probably retard social reform, he hoped for a speedy success for British arms

(1) Campbell-Bannerman MSS. ADD.MSS.41,211, Bryce to Campbell-Bannerman 12th November 1899,

and affirmed that he would vote for supplies to this end. (1) The Echo wrote "he is as good an Englishman and as convinced an Imperialist as his opponent." (2) "Imperialist" was becoming a necessary term of approval for Liberals and Conservatives alike. Liberals appealed to patriotic sentiment. At an eve of election meeting where the audience "was composed of the finest type of East End artisan," (2) the chairman "very wisely began by showing that meeting, that Liberals sympathised heartily with news of victory and were glad to think that the beneficent rule of the Queen would be enjoyed all over South Africa," (3) Chamberlain might be denigrated as the author of the war, but both John Burns and Henry Broadhurst found it expedient to praise the "heroic officers and gallant soldiers." Those comments were very favourably received by the audience. The Nonconformist reporter at the meeting concluded that the audience were in favour of war, and asked, "Why has Mr. Guthrie (the Conservative candidate) a monopoly of

(1) Star, 19th October 1899.

(2) Echo, 25th October 1899.

(3) British Weekly, 26th October 1899; special report on the bye-election.

the Union Jack?" (1) However the Conservatives held the seat with much the same vote as in 1895, while the Liberal vote was reduced by over a thousand, - the seat had been won by the Liberals in 1885 and 1892. (2) This defeat set the pattern for the majority of bye-elections in 1899-1900.

There were always a minority of Liberals who supported the Government. After the war broke out more Liberals joined the Imperialist section; the variety of Liberal attitudes became greater, ranging from a demand that the war should be stopped immediately through varying opinions on the most desirable moment for negotiation and on the terms of the final settlement. Only a minority of Liberals played an active part in the peace movement of 1900.

Contemporaries were in little doubt of the almost unanimous anti-war attitude displayed by Socialist and working class organisations. The only real division was in the Fabian Society where a majority of members supported the war. Twenty-five resolutions from working class bodies were sent to the Colonial Office,

(1) Ibid.

(2) Star, 28th October 1899.

and nine additional resolutions are noted in the London Radical press. Of these, nine were from Trades Councils in Bradford, Maidstone, Darwen, Reading, Lincoln, Keighley, Southport, Erith and Manchester. The Manchester resolution was proposed by a representative of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and passed with only two dissentients, though it was opposed by the Typographical Society. (1) There were only two resolutions from Trades Union branches, both from London, - Finchley Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, and Walthamstow Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. The Operative Bricklayers and the A.S.E. however supported the Hyde Park anti-war demonstration. (2) There is no record of a resolution from a Miners Union except for one statement by Marsden Lodge of the Durham Miners Association who claimed that the Uirlander agitation was "the work of avaricious capitalists...who only desire to make money, even at the sacrifice of the lives of their countrymen and the hard

(1) Manchester Guardian, 21st September 1899.

(2) Echo, 22nd September 1899.

earned money of the British taxpayers." (1)

A wholehearted S.D.F. campaign for peace began early, on 9th July with a Trafalgar Square meeting at which W.C. Steadman, the Lib-Lab M.P. for Stepney, G.B. Clark and Michael Davitt, spoke. The resolution protested "against the overwhelming power of the British Empire being used to coerce a small and non-aggressive population..." The inhabitants of Johannesburg "are assuredly no worse off...than millions of Englishmen at home whose grievances are entirely disregarded." (2)

This resolution with its allusion to the limited franchise in Britain was repeated at a public meeting organised by Accrington Socialist Party, a small Edinburgh meeting of the local S.D.F., I.L.P. and Trades Council, and a meeting of Manchester and Salford S.D.F. at Trafford Bridge. (3)

Hyndman thought that the increasing difficulties of British Imperialism could only herald its end, - "Apart from the trouble in Africa, those famines which we now periodically manufacture in India

(1) Newcastle Chronicle, 3rd October 1899.

(2) Reynolds News, 16th July 1899.

(3) See C.O. 417/277, resolution sent in July and early August.

can only end in one way. I rejoice to believe therefore that I may yet live to see the end of the Imperialism of the pirate...I shouldn't be a bit surprised also if some of these swindling Jews and aristocrats and plutocratic ruffians found their way to the lamp post after all." (1)

The National Council of the I.L.P. was opposed from the first to the prospect of war. On 3rd July it agreed "to form a committee of all bodies opposed to war with the Transvaal in order to protest against this country being forced into war by the jingoes." (2) Six I.L.P. branches passed resolutions working out a more convincing and telling criticism of the Government than the Liberals had been able to do. For example Manchester and Salford I.L.P. stated "two hundred millions of her Majesty's subjects in India and hundreds of thousands of men in Great Britain and her colonies are unjustly deprived of their political rights." Desire for war was attributed chiefly to the mine-owners, "We believe that the present crisis has been

(1) Dilke MSS. ADD.MSS. 43,916; General Correspondence 1897-1900, Lyndman to Dilke, 1st November 1899.

(2) Minute Book of National Administrative Council of the I.L.P. 1899-1902, minutes of meeting held 3rd July 1899.

wilfully brought about by mining speculators, stock gamblers and others, with the greedy and selfish desire of appropriating this remarkable territory to their own aggrandisement." (1) Lincoln Trades Council considered that "it would be a better policy on the Government's part to look after the interests of workers at home than to meddle with the laws of an independent state."

There were attacks on Rhodes and the Chartered Company and references to the Jameson Raid; Keighley Trades Council ironically congratulated the Government on its "preparations for a second Transvaal Raid."

The Transvaal problem was related to the interests of finance capitalism represented by the Rhodes clique, and provided these premises were accepted, a coherent argument against war could be assembled. But this meant that the part played by the mining capitalists was exaggerated (many of them were fairly satisfied with the status quo in the Transvaal) and the part played by Milner and the politicians at

(1) C.O. 417/277, resolution sent by Bristol Socialist Society, 23rd September 1899.

home was underplayed. The desire for political supremacy in South Africa, irrespective of economic advantages was largely ignored in the Socialist resolutions.

A resolution on the South African situation was proposed at the Trades Union Congress in September, but did not pass without opposition. Proposed by Steadman, it was discussed for an hour on the last day of the Conference. It was rather moderate in tone and read "...this Congress urges upon the Government the great necessity of using every possible effort to settle the dispute with the Transvaal Government by peaceful methods, as war would mean great suffering and irreparable damage to the workpeople of both countries." (1) R. Bell of the London Railway Servants seconding, understood that "it was a question of capitalists who having smelt gold in the Transvaal were determined to accumulate as much of it as they possibly could (hear hear)." Bell was a Socialist who contested Derby as a Labour candidate in 1900.

(1) Report of the Trades Union Congress, September 1899.

However G.D. Kelley of the Manchester Lithographic Printers, said the proposal was out of place and was inopportune in view of the decimated state of the Congress, - a good many delegates had gone home, - and that the hands of the Government should be strengthened. Another speaker did not approve of the discussion of political topics at the T.U.C. at all. In the end the vote went in favour of the resolution, but with a good deal of dissent.

This was however more promising than the proceedings at the 1901 Congress, when the General Purposes Committee prevented discussion of the war, by ruling it against standing orders; a resolution to suspend standing orders was defeated by over one hundred votes. (1)

Outright support for the Government among the working class was almost entirely confined to groups already committed to Conservative or anti-trades union policies. A number of Conservative Working Men's Clubs sent in resolutions, - there were fifteen of these which arrived at the Colonial Office before war broke out.

(1) Report of Trades Union Congress, September 1901.

Conservative Clubs received a steady blast of Imperialist propaganda. Lantern slide lectures were a feature of the clubs on such topics as "The British Navy" and "Our Colonial Empire". (1) The Imperial South Africa Association frequently sent round lecturers. In 1899 lectures on the Transvaal were usual and often raised the audience to excesses of patriotism; at Farnham Working Men's Conservative Club in Lancashire, after a talk on South Africa, a Major Crofton sang verses of "Soldiers of the Queen" the chorus of which was taken up with great enthusiasm. (2)

The National Free Labour Association at its seventh annual meeting in October, equated freedom for the Uitlanders with freedom for the non-Unionist in Britain. (3) In Liverpool a British Workers South African Union had been formed to counteract the local peace committees. (4) The London United Workmen's Committee believed in maintaining "intact the trade of the Empire" combined

(1) Conservative Clubs Gazette, issues in 1899.

(2) Ibid, December 1899.

(3) C.O. 417/278, resolution sent 10th October 1899.

(4) Ibid.

with a desire "to prevent senseless and abortive labour strikes," It believed in a "wise, just and true Imperialism" and hoped that war would be pursued till the "power of the British Empire reigns paramount in South Africa and the Union Jack floats over Pretoria and Bloemfontein." (1)

But Liberal and Labour working men were very much on the side of peace. The Arbitrator observed in October, "As yet we have not seen any expression of opinion in favour of the war from bona fide organisations of working men. But we have observed with pleasure that a number of them have protested against it." The International Arbitration League, (2) prepared an anti-war address which was circulated and signed by a number of labour representatives. (3)

A resolution against the war was sent from the Mansfield House University Settlement signed by the warden, Percy Alden. (4) Samuel Barnett, warden of

(1) C.O. 417/277, resolution sent 30th September 1899.

(2) The name adopted by the Workmen's Peace Association in 1893.

(3) Arbitrator, October 1899. Reynolds News, 8th October 1899.

(4) C.O. 417/277, resolution sent 26th June 1899.

Toynbee Hall issued a manifesto against the war. (1)

But this settlement was divided over the war. As the editorial of the Toynbee Record said "There are Imperialists and peace men in the house...one resident indeed takes a leading part in the Imperialist movement." (2) This was H.F. Wyatt, a Navy League lecturer. At a debate in November, "...the majority of members present were opposed to the present war," (3) but singing of patriotic songs at concerts went on in Toynbee Hall as in other clubs.

In some towns there was Lib-Lab co-operation in peace activity. This was especially marked in London. The Hyde Park demonstration committee included representatives of Bermondsey Labour League and J. Macdonald of the London Trades Council, while members of the S.D.F., the Fabians, Manchester S.D.F. and Bristol Socialist Society, were present along with Liberals at the giant meeting of 24th September. (4)

(1) Courtney MSS. Vol 8, Samuel Barnett to Courtney, 28th August 1899.

(2) Toynbee Record, November 1899. See also J.A.R. Pimlott, Toynbee Hall, fifty years of social progress, London 1935, for a similar conclusion.

(3) Toynbee Record, December 1899.

(4) Echo, 20th September, 22nd September 1899.

In connection with this demonstration, F.W. Souttar of Bermondsey Labour League, issued a manifesto to the working people of London, which read "did not you men of London, have to pull down the Hyde Park railings to get a vote...Yet even today there are hundreds of thousands of you working men who have no vote;...you are only good enough to pay taxes and find the expenses of a war to give a vote in the Transvaal to capitalists, gold mine owners, company promoters and swindlers. The government can always come to you for money for wars, but never have any to give you for an old age pension. War means for you, less work, smaller wages, more taxes, greater poverty." (1) This was a comprehensive anti-war case, directed specifically to the working classes.

Some meetings were held in the East End of London against the war, with largely working class audiences. Poplar Labour League organised a meeting at Poplar Town Hall on 28th September, where five hundred working men heard with enthusiasm, Will Crooks and G.B.

(1) Reynold's News, 24th September, Echo, 20th September 1899.

Clark. (1) At a Bethnal Green meeting of working men, the M.P. B. Pickersgill spoke against the war, and the resolution was proposed by Charles Freak of the London County Council and seconded by Hodgson Pratt of the International Arbitration and Peace Association. (2)

A working class meeting at Bow and Bromley, however was broken up by Conservatives. The opposition attempted to mount the platform and police were called to range themselves across the hall separating the two sides. "In the meantime the Liberals had gathered up the rows of chairs and piled them breast high in front of the platform as a barricade..." (3)

The Manchester Transvaal Committee included some S.D.F. members, notably Fred Brocklehurst who stood as a Labour candidate for S.W. Manchester in the 1900 election. In Liverpool the Transvaal Committee included members of the I.L.P. and Fabians as well as Nonconformists. (4) The I.L.P. in Glasgow planned a

(1) Poplar Labour League, Annual report and statement of Accounts, 1899-1900.

East End News and London shipping chronicle, 4th October 1899.
Echo, 29th September 1899.

(2) Star, 8th September 1899.

(3) East End News, 11th October 1899.

(4) Manchester Guardian, 5th October 1899.

demonstration against the war, inviting representatives of the Liberal and Radical Association, Irish Nationalists, S.D.F., Trades Council, Secular Society and Peace Society. (1)

On the other hand in Bristol Liberals played no part in anti-war activity which was left to the Socialist Society.

The great bulk of pro-Government resolutions came from Conservative or Liberal Unionist Associations, with a few from habitations of the Primrose League or Orange Lodges (mainly from Ireland). The I.S.A.A. held a large number of meetings, starting with a series in the north-east in July and extending to the Midlands. Eleven pro-Government resolutions were sent from a variety of miscellaneous bodies. These included a cycling club at Hyde which sent a bellicose resolution declaring their intention "if war should result...to fight the game out to a finish." There were two resolutions from Victuallers and beersellers protection associations, one from Liverpool watchmakers and jewellers, and one from Salford Young England Patriotic Association, and anti-

(1) Bryce MSS. Box on South African War, Joseph Burgess to Bryce, 8th October 1899.

Socialist body. Tunbridge Wells farmers club sent a vote of confidence, while the Fun club in Norfolk, hoped that the "God of battles will indeed be on our side."

There were areas which sent proportionally large numbers of pro-Government resolutions. Lancashire for example sent over forty before 11th October, - almost a quarter of the total. All but three of the resolutions from Scotland were pro-Government. Cardiff sent six votes of confidence in the Government and Ipswich three.

All the pro-Government resolutions called for equal rights for the Uitlanders. Uitlander grievances had been well publicised by the I.S.A.A. who reiterated the hostility of the Transvaal police, the lack of municipal government for Johannesburg, the dynamite monopoly, the heavy taxation, the prejudiced judiciary, as well as the usual franchise complaint. ⁽¹⁾ But only seventy of the resolutions, - under a quarter of the total, - specifically referred to supremacy, paramountcy or the prestige of Britain in South Africa. The wider

(1) The British case against the Boer Republics, an I.S.A.A. publication, 1899.

Imperial implications of the issue were thus often ignored. Some resolutions however were more enterprising such as that from Billericay Conservative and Liberal Association, which hoped that "the British Empire shall extend in the future from the Cape to the Zambesi."

There was small mention of the rights of the native races in any of the resolutions. The anti-war resolutions emphasised the affinity of the two white races. A large number of these resolutions referred to the danger of permanent racial hatred in the event of war. The London United Methodist Free Churches were against war with a "Christian Protestant people" and the Society of Friends in North Oxfordshire pointed to the danger of "permanently alienating a people of the same race and faith as ourselves."

The anti-war resolutions included four from Town Councils, two in Ireland and two in London, - West Ham and Walthamstow, two from Temperance Societies, one from Hackney Board of Guardians and a petition signed by the inhabitants of Kentish Town.

Peace resolutions contained a variety of attitudes, - that the Transvaal was independent, suzerainty having

been dropped at the 1884 Convention, some praise for the Boers at the expense of the greedy itinerant Uitlanders, and a belief that the Boers had not begun arming till after the discreditable Jameson Raid.

A few resolutions alluded to the Raid, which, York Liberal Association declared, "establishes a strong claim upon the patience and forbearance of the English Government."

There was also some suggestion that war was being forced on the Boers by the Government, especially by the bete noire, Chamberlain, who wanted a completely British South Africa. The prototype of the anti-war resolution which could command the widest support, however, was the National Memorial against the war, which received 54,000 signatures. It stated "we the undersigned, while determined to use all pacific means to secure equal rights and full justice for our fellow-countrymen in the Transvaal, are of the opinion that the differences now remaining between what our Government has demanded and what the Boers have conceded, are not sufficient to justify our plunging South Africa into war. We enter our solemn

protest against any appeal to the sword to settle our differences with the Transvaal until after the principle of arbitration has been tried and found wanting." (1) This indirectly conceded that British supremacy could be achieved peacefully by the Uitlanders swamping the Transvaal with numbers and wealth. It could not be described as pro-Boer and it showed the impact of the Hague peace conference by its appeal to arbitration.

There are thirty-two resolutions from anti-war public meetings in the Colonial Office files, and an additional twenty appear in the press. There are also instances of eleven anti-war meetings broken up before the beginning of the war. Forty-eight pro-Government meetings sent resolutions to the Colonial Office. These were often prompted by Conservative Associations or the I.S.A.A. and are a feature of the early anti-Boer campaign in June, July and August. The anti-war meetings did not get under way till September.

Nine meetings in London were successfully held in

(1) Echo, 30th September 1899.

opposition to the war. They included the S.D.F. demonstration in July, the Poplar and Bethnal Green meetings, a Liberal meeting in St. Martin's Town Hall, three meetings on Sunday October 8th, at Battersea, Finsbury Park and Highbury Common, a "densely crowded meeting"-at the Reform Club in Walworth, and a Brixton meeting. Six London meetings on the other hand were broken up by opponents including the 24th September demonstration in Trafalgar Square. Two attempts to hold meetings at Peckham Rye failed; on Sunday, October 1st a member of South London Ethical Society tried to put a resolution in favour of arbitration, but the chairman had to admit that the resolution and amendment were both equally supported. (1) A second meeting the following Sunday received the same opposition. (2) Also on 8th October a meeting organised by Hampstead Peace Society was broken up. (3) A Brockwell Park the chairman of a proposed peace meeting prudently did not appear and the platform was quickly taken over by

(1) Ibid, 2nd October 1899.

(2) Ibid, 9th October 1899.

(3) Ibid, 10th October 1899.

government supporters who passed a resolution of confidence in Chamberlain. (1) The Liberal meeting at Bow and Bromley was also disrupted.

G.B. Clark wrote "The jingo element is very strong in London, stronger than it is in the other provincial towns." (2) But the practice of breaking up peace meetings was prevalent all over the country, - especially in October when war became more imminent, and the peace party were also more active in an effort to avert it. At a Crewe meeting, with the Mayor presiding, an amendment to the resolution was passed by a large majority to the accompaniment of cries of "remember Majuba Hill !" (3) A meeting at Rochester had been partly organised by Quakers, and R. Souttar M.P. was to speak, but a resolution in favour of the Government was passed while soldiers and sailors paraded round the room. (4) At Wrexham on 3rd October, Bryn Roberts M.P. was unable to speak owing to the disorder caused by members of the North Lancashire

(1) Reynolds News, 8th October 1899.

(2) C.O. 417/313, Miscellaneous letters on South Africa, April - August 1900. Letter from G.B. Clark to Kruger, dated 29th September 1899. This was later discovered in Pretoria - June 1900 and returned to England.

(3) Liverpool Courier, 13th September 1899. Birmingham Daily Post, 13th September 1899.

(4) Birmingham Post, 10th October 1899.

Regiment and reservists. (1)

Twenty successful anti-war meetings were held in Lancashire, (2) in spite of the Conservative strength in the area. Half of these were held in Manchester and its environs, three in Manchester itself including the famous meeting with Morley, the S.D.F. demonstration in August and a meeting on the eve of war organised by the Manchester and Salford Free Church Council. Nonconformists played some part in these meetings, - at Ponglebury a Wesleyan minister presided over an enthusiastic meeting, at which all the local dissenting churches were represented; (3) at Bury a Methodist New Connexion minister chaired the meeting which was attended by members of the Congregationalist chapel as well as by Liberals. (4) The Rochdale meeting was chaired by the Mayor and the resolution forwarded by the Town Clerk. H.J. Wilson spoke at Ashton-under-Lyne and W.T. Stead at Leek. Thirteen pro-Government meetings were also held in Lancashire.

(1) Manchester Guardian, 3rd October 1899.

(2) This total included one at Hyde and one at Glossop, - both just outside the county boundary, but in the Manchester district.

(3) Birmingham Daily Post, 7th October 1899.

(4) Manchester Guardian, 19th September 1899.

There were ten anti-war meetings in Yorkshire, three organised by members of the Quaker Rowntree family, at Scarborough, Thirsk and York. There was also a large meeting in Leeds on 6th October addressed by C.P. Scott, F. Maddison and R. Souttar. This was organised by the Leeds Transvaal Committee and a Unitarian minister presided. The resolution passed amid some interruptions and an anti-Boer demonstration was held outside the hall and near the local Conservative club. (1)

Thus well over two thirds of the peace meetings took place in Lancashire, Yorkshire and London. The south-west in a more minor way was a centre of peace meeting activity, - public meetings were held at Taunton, Frome, Glastonbury and Street.

The most blatant example of jingoism occurred at the London Trafalgar Square meeting on 24th September. The organisation of this monster meeting was the chief project of the London peace party. The Liberal Forwards took the initiative in this arrangement, - the committee meetings were held at the Liberal Forwards Club and

(1) Leeds Daily News, 7th October 1899.

Institute Union. (1) A circular on 10th September, signed by G.B. Clark, urged Labour, Trades Union and Political associations to join with Liberals in organising a composite demonstration. (2) The committee included H. Victor Fisher, of the Transvaal Committee labour representatives, L.C.C. members and members of the Metropolitan Radical Federation. W.T. Stead was an active, if puzzling, addition to the peace movement. G.B. Clark forwarding a pamphlet to Kruger at the end of September, remarked, "Mr. Stead...has been until lately one of our enemies. He has now come round to our side and is a very valuable ally." (3) Stead favoured a peaceful partnership between Boers and British and had been an eager advocate of the Hague peace conference. In spite of his friendship for Rhodes he took strong exception to a policy of force in South Africa. His social and political connections were doubtless an asset to the peace organisation, - he wrote to Courtney - "I am busy writing personally to the

(1) Echo, 11th September 1899.

(2) Ibid.

(3) C.O., 412/313, G.B. Clark to Kruger, op cit.

leading persons of both front benches, and to all who are in any way likely to make a sympathetic response." His pamphlet, "Shall I slay my brother Boer ?" which quoted extensively from the speeches by Morley and Courtney at Manchester, was circulated to a hundred thousand ministers of religion and to fifty thousand "influential persons." (1) Stead however was easy to discredit on account of his belief in spiritualism,-- the Imperialist-Nationalist, Arnold White, described him in December 1899 as "a Russophile humanitarian, whose claim to authority in South African affairs seems to rest exclusively on his alleged commerce with the spirit world and especially with a ghost named Julia." (2)

There were six platforms at the Trafalgar Square meeting with speakers from the Liberal Party, the Transvaal Committee, the peace societies and labour organisations. Representatives from Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol were present. However a large hostile crowd gathered, which sang patriotic songs, threw missiles and even knives at the speakers, and made it

(1) Courtney MSS. Vol 8, W.T. Stead to Courtney, 23rd September 1899.

(2) National Review, December 1899, Arnold White, "The cankers of a long peace," p.673.

impossible for the meeting to continue. (1) The crowd cheered "the Queen, for Nelson, for Gordon, for the Empire, and for everything that had a remote connection with Imperialism." (2) Clark estimated the size of the crowd at between thirty and forty thousand, and claimed that it had been incited by "the war journals" (3) The promoters of the meeting met the same veening and condemned the "organised interruption...fomented by the yellow and stock jobbing press." (4) It appeared that the meeting had been publicised in the Pall Mall Gazette, the Sun, the Evening News and the Daily Mail. The Star declared that the crowd had leaders and was working to a pre-arranged plan. (5) A report in the Arbitrator came to the same conclusion, and a writer in Concord asserted that the disruption of the meeting had been deliberately organised, and demanded an enquiry. (6)

(1) Star, 25th September 1899.

(2) Pall Mall Gazette, 25th September 1899.

(3) C.O. 417/313, Clark to Kruger, opcit.

(4) Pall Mall Gazette, 25th September 1899.

(5) 25th September 1899.

(6) Concord, October 1899.

Hyndman later embellished the tale by relating how the mob "had been brought up from the East End at the cost of half-a-crown or so a head and unlimited liquor." (1)

The peace party were convinced that the pro-Government mob was not acting spontaneously, though nothing seems to have been proved. An eyewitness wrote of the composition of the crowd, - "Very few actual roughs were present; the vast majority was made up of young men of the "masher" type, who crowd music-halls and swallow with avidity the patriotic bunkum which is nightly to be heard in these establishments...of mechanics and bona fide labourers, very few were present." (2) The majority of the handful of defendants who appeared at Bow Street court the next day were men of no given occupation, though there were also a baker and a stoker. (3) The same pattern of singing, noise and attempts to hold rival meetings, was followed in the disruption of meetings in other parts of the country.

After the Trafalgar Square fiasco, the attentions of the London peace party turned to the promotion of a

(1) Further Reminiscences, p.160.

(2) Arbitrator, October 1899.

(3) Echo, 26th September 1899.

National Memorial against the war. This originated from the offices of the International Arbitration and Peace Association, and the only organisers specifically mentioned were G.H. Ferris the editor of Concord and J.F. Green the secretary of the I.A.P.A. (1) But Stead and Philip Stanhope M.P. also played an important part and the memorial may have been first suggested by a Socialist Herbert Burrows. (2) Well-known individuals may have been specially requested to sign it, - it was signed by the Bishops of Durham, Hereford and Norwich, leaders of Nonconformity, members of the L.C.C. and School Board, - but it was mainly publicised by being printed in the Star, the Echo and the Manchester Guardian with instructions to cut it out, sign it and send it in. It first appeared on 30th September and continued to be published till 10th October. By 5th October 17,605 signatures had been received, the Star remarking "there has been hardly any organisation and this large number of replies represents practically a spontaneous volume of

(1) Star, 7th October 1899.

(2) Echo, 9th October 1899, letter from Herbert Burrows.

opinion." (1) On 6th October 21,856 signatures had arrived, by 9th October 34,254, and by 10th October 37,461. (2) With signatures arriving at the rate of over 3,000 a day the organisers were reported to be overwhelmed with work. The total signatures were over 54,000 so that a quarter of the total must have come after the war had started. Over 7,000 signatures were sent by the Manchester Transvaal Committee which made its own collection. The Manchester Guardian suggested that ministers might submit it to their congregations, (3) and a large proportion of signatures seems to have been collected at the end of Sunday services on 1st and 8th October, - the Manchester Congregational Church for instance, sent 126 signatures and Manchester Primitive Methodists, 200 signatures, while Boscombe St. George Congregational Church collected 115. (4) Other batches of names were collected by individuals, - J. Southall forwarded 209 signatures from Edgbaston near Birmingham,

(1) Star, 5th October 1899.

(2) Ibid, 6th October, 9th October, 10th October 1899.

(3) 30th September 1899.

(4) Manchester Guardian, 2nd, 3rd, 4th October 1899.

a Mr. Gauntlett 162 from Exeter, and a Mr. Priestman 105 from Hull, while the two Devon villages of Outer and Inner Hope sent 69 names, - those of every adult inhabitant. (1)

From this response the peace party concluded that anti-war feeling was considerable, that the peace advocates were growing in number and would have prevailed had it not been for the fait accompli of the Boer ultimatum. (2) The Baptist leader Dr. Clifford found in August that the prevailing mood was scepticism as to war, - understandable in view of the false alarm of the war scare in October 1898. (3) Clark was hopeful that pressure from the peace party was producing a more rational attitude. (4) A number of Conservative resolutions deprecated peace activities and showed some uneasiness at their success.

Outside London, the Manchester peace movement

(1) Manchester Guardian, 10th October 1899.
Star, 10th October 1899.

(2) Star, 12th October 1899.

(3) Ibid, 30th August 1899.

(4) C.O., 417/313, Clark to Kruger, op cit.

was probably the most important. At the beginning of September the Manchester National Reform Union issued a circular to its branches urging them to take action to prevent war, and the John Bright League took a similar line. (1) The Transvaal Committee formed on 5th September owed much to the efforts of C.P. Scott, and was strongly Liberal orientated. Its members included Leif Jones, one of the Manchester Liberal candidates, L.T. Hobhouse who was on the staff of the Guardian, Alderman E. Guthrie, Lord Farrer who donated £110, Canon Hicks a Church of England clergyman and S.D.F members. (2) Its first and most successful venture was a public meeting with Morley and Courtney on 15th September. Morley was at first reluctant to attend and may have been persuaded by Courtney. (3) At first it seemed that the meeting might be overborne by the opposition and it was mainly Morley's tactful speech ending with a particularly emotional appeal, which

(1) Manchester Guardian, 5th October 1899.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Courtney MSS. Vol 8, C.P. Scott to Courtney, telegram of 9th September.

secured the approbation of the audience. Organised opposition from the Conservatives had been feared, (1) and admission was by ticket only, - a correspondent to the Pall Mall Gazette, asserted that their distribution had been confined to Liberal and Radical clubs, Congregational and Unitarian chapels, so that the audience consisted largely of "young men and women from Sunday Schools ...the balance was supplied by the radical clubs." (2) Morley wrote, "The war party had publically advertised and encouraged attempts to smash it, and young men were earnestly advocated in partisan prints at least for one night to sacrifice their billiards and tobacco for the honour of their native land." (3) Even the best organised meeting was in danger of being disrupted.

Further activities of the Transvaal Committee comprised collecting signatures for the National Memorial and issuing some pamphlets in October, - one a reprint of Canon Hicks' sermon in Manchester Cathedral. (4)

(1) Birmingham Daily Post, 15th September 1899.

(2) Pall Mall Gazette, 19th September 1899.

(3) John Morley, Recollections, Vol 2, pp.85-6.

(4) Star, 5th October 1899.

At the end of September an appeal for financial support was made and the Committee desired information on anti-war sermons, peace meetings and requests for literature. (1) The outbreak of war seems to have largely demoralised the Committee, - it modified its name to the Transvaal Peace Committee but did little constructive work; most of the activity in the Manchester area was left to Socialist organisations.

In Liverpool, one of the centres of Lancashire Conservatism, the peace movement was weaker and more Nonconformist orientated. Especially prominent were the Unitarian Rev. Richard Armstrong who published a sermon against the war, (2) and the Baptist Rev. C.F. Aked who organised the Transvaal Committee, which included a number of Nonconformists and Peace Society members. (3) It was decided to circularise ministers asking them to sign a requisition to the Mayor for a public meeting. (4) But only forty eight favourable replies were received out of three

(1) W.T. Stead, "Shall I slay my brother Boer?" included circular of Manchester Transvaal Committee.

(2) Liverpool Courier, 20th September 1899.

(3) Ibid, 6th October 1899.

(4) Ibid.

hundred and fifty sent, and the deputation to request a town meeting was refused. (1)

The Transvaal Committee in Birmingham was formed of Quakers and local Liberal councillors. (2) A peace meeting was arranged for 5th October at the Midland Institute, to be addressed by G.B. Clark. Tickets were distributed to peace supporters requesting them to come early, but when the doors were opened the opposition rushed in and outnumbered the peace party in the hall by three to one; the peace advocates at the front were separated from the rest by a line of policemen. There then occurred a "scene of excitement such as had seldom been witnessed in Birmingham," - Rule Britannia was sung, there were cheers for Chamberlain and hisses for Kruger, and the platform speakers could not make themselves heard. Over half an hour was spent in this way, and in the end an opposition amendment was accepted by the chairman and declared passed. Outside a rival meeting of pro-Government supporters was held, followed by a

(1) Ibid, 7th October 1899.

(2) Birmingham Daily Post, 16th September 1899.

parade through the streets by a crowd headed by the Union Jack. ⁽¹⁾ This disaster ended the efforts of the Birmingham peace party for 1899.

The peace meeting in Newcastle similarly failed. It took place on 11th October, an unpropitious date on the eve of war. Thomas Burt presided and on the platform were Hugh Boyles, President of the Northumberland Miners, Charles Fenwick, G.B. Clark and a Congregationalist minister. ⁽²⁾ Though admission was by ticket only, a pro-Government crowd pressed in, and as in Birmingham passed the time by singing patriotic songs. Finally at 10.45 pm, a local Conservative moved an amendment and declared it carried by a large majority. ⁽³⁾

In Bristol the Peace and Arbitration Society attempted to hold a meeting on 12th October at a local Baptist chapel. The pro-Government party put out a handbill describing Clark, who was due to speak, as a Boer agent, and calling on all loyal citizens to attend the meeting. ⁽⁴⁾ The crowd swarmed over the pulpit,

(1) Ibid., 6th October 1899.

(2) Newcastle Daily Chronicle, 12th October 1899.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Western Daily Press, 13th October 1899.

sang songs, waved Union Jacks and called on Mr. George White "the popular managing director of the Tramways Co." to speak; he submitted an amendment which was declared passed. (1)

Jingoist demonstrations increased in October as war became more inevitable. The behaviour of the crowds in different towns was remarkably uniform, - they all repeated two or three patriotic songs with monotonous regularity, their aim was to prevent peace advocates from speaking at all and if possible to pass pro-Government resolutions. The mobilisation of large crowds and the production of handbills indicates that there was a considerable element of planning behind the disruption. All the ingredients of the much more virulent jingoism of 1900 were present prior to the outbreak of the war in 1899. The rejoicing in the music halls at the 1900 victories, was foreshadowed in the spontaneous acclamation of Chamberlain when "Rule Britannia" was played at a promenade concert early in October 1899. (2)

(1) Ibid.

(2) Echo, 2nd October 1899.

The peace movement from June to October 1899 was strongest in Lancashire and Yorkshire, parts of Wales and south-west England and working class areas of London. One hundred and ninety-two resolutions, - two fifths of the total, - came from the six counties of northern England, - Cumberland, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire and Lancashire; one hundred and twenty-one of these, - two thirds, - opposed the war. (1) The Yorkshire resolutions were almost four to one in favour of peace. The influence of Nonconformity was especially strong here in peace activity.

There were thirty-six resolutions from Wales before the war, dividing sixteen for the Government and twenty opposed to it. Of the pro-Government resolutions however, six came from Cardiff Conservative Associations and three from meetings held in June in mining villages and organised by the Glamorgan Conservative Association. The anti-war resolutions were mainly from Nonconformist Churches, with only twelve from Liberal Associations. The rural and Nonconformist areas

(1) This refers to resolutions in the C.O. files, sent before the outbreak of war. The resolutions from the North of England broke down into 117 from Lancashire, 52 from Yorkshire, 19 from Northumberland and Durham and four from Cumberland and Westmoreland.

of Wales were less jingoistic than the towns. (1)

Scotland sent twelve resolutions, all pro-Government except for the Edinburgh S.D.F. meeting and resolutions from a Quaker group and Free Church Presbytery.

The Irish peace movement was much more aggressively pro-Boer than its English counterpart. The Irish Nationalists identified with the Boer farmers. At a large open air meeting in Dublin on 1st October Michael Davitt expressed hope for a Boer victory and Irish desertions to the Boers. (2) He wished that "God might strengthen the arm of every Boer who shouldered a gun to defend the independence of the Transvaal." (3) A resolution from Fermoy U.D.C. was sympathetic to the "plucky Boer farmers" and hoped "that if a war takes place it may end in another Majuba Hill" (4) But not many of these vehement opinions were embodied in resolutions sent to the Colonial Office, - only six resolutions were sent from Ireland including four pro-

(1) See K.O. Morgan, Wales in British Politics, Cardiff 1963, p.178. for corroboration of the C.O. files picture of Welsh opinion.

(2) Birmingham Daily Post, 2nd October 1899.

(3) Pall Mall Gazette, 26th September 1899.

(4) C.O. 417/278, resolution sent 29th September.

Government ones from Ulster. Irish opinion was not adequately represented in the C.O. files.

From 11th October, one hundred and sixty eight resolutions were sent to the Colonial Office, all except seven, pro-Government. No peace resolutions except from one meeting in Norfolk were forwarded after 13th October. The opposition had been effectively silenced by the fait accompli of the war. As Stead wrote "Many persons who...condemned our Government for its evident determination to impose its unjust pretensions upon the Transvaal by force of arms, now seem to think...that the guilt of aggression is transferred to the Boers because they have taken the initiative." (1)

(1) Review of Reviews, November 1899.

Peace activity in the first year of the Boer War,
October 1899 to October 1900.

One theme of this period is the failure of the Liberals for the most part to rise to the challenge provided by Imperialist expansion in South Africa. This is related to the earlier Liberal compromises over Uganda and Fashoda. The peace movement collapsed when the war began, and when it revived at the beginning of 1900 it was in a much more limited form. In the atmosphere of tense patriotism many of the half-hearted anti-Imperialists had drifted away. This tendency is pin pointed in a letter to Bryce from a Frederick Binyon of Grange over Sands, - "Before the war broke out I was rather inclined to sympathise with the Boers, but on further acquaintance their extreme disregard for truth has quite alienated me, and I cannot but think that it will be a blessed result that the two Republics should be brought back under the British flag." (1)

The danger to British troops and the early Boer

(1) Bryce MSS. Box on South African War, - letter of 21st March 1900.

successes made peace activity seem especially unpatriotic; Channing wrote, - "In these weeks at the opening of the war, strong reaction was aroused by the struggle in Natal. The glorious bravery of British officers and men and the grave danger to British arms increased my difficulties in arranging meetings." (1)

The vacuum in anti-war activity was bridged by Stead's periodical War against War, which put forward an uncompromising programme, - "What do you want to do ? Stop this war. When ? Immediately. Why Because we are in the wrong. How ? By confessing our sins and doing right." Not even all peace supporters were prepared to accept this policy. The chief anti-war project towards the end of 1899 was a memorial to the Queen, which was to be circulated, signed and returned to the office of the I.A.P.A. - the same address as the National Memorial in October. It was advertised in War against War. The first memorial demanded an "immediate suspension of hostilities" restoration of the status quo but with a five year franchise for

(1) F.A. Channing, Op cit. p.219.

the Uitlanders, though it also contained the sophistry that the war had been brought about because Chamberlain had failed to explain the Queen's opinions to the Transvaal Government. But this was too extreme for many potential signatories, and a week later "in deference to the representations from valued correspondents," a second memorial was drawn up with no mention of an immediate end to the war, but suggesting that the British generals in South Africa should propose reasonable terms to the Boers. (1)

Most signatures were collected by house to house visits or appeals from the pulpit. Stead discouraged any obvious display of peace principles in public meetings or handbills, feeling that this would lead to violent jingoism. He probably had in mind a meeting he had tried to hold in Norwich at the beginning of November which had been broken up by an organised "band of from 200 - 300 roughs," who "howled and sang persistently, so as to prevent a word being heard." (2) It was much too dangerous to hold meetings; as a correspondent of Bryce

(1) War against War, 17th November 1899.

(2) Ibid, 10th November 1899.

wrote in November 1899, - "...it is useless trying to enlighten the public...the whole atmosphere is so utterly wrong that the truth cannot be received." (1)

By the beginning of January the attempt to secure signature had been abandoned, since the wording of the second memorial had become highly inappropriate in view of the Boer victories. (2)

The lists of signatures printed in War against War, included over one thousand from London and over two thousand from other towns; (3)

The printed list was not quite complete since some signatures still had to arrive and these were not published, but even so the total was extremely small in comparison with the fifty thousand signatures to the National Memorial.

Two hundred London signatures were sent from Hackney, possibly collected by the Peace Union there. Ninety two came from Hampstead. Eighty one were forwarded by a Congregational minister, Rev. W. Urwick. Sixty eight came from Wimbledon Congregational Church, fifty two from Battersea where a strong peace organisation

(1) Bryce MSS. Box on South African War. Letter of 30th November 1899, F.A. Molteno to Bryce.

(2) War against War, 5th January 1900.

(3) Ibid, 62 towns sent signatures all except 8 in England.

was later built up. Sixty two came from Peckham and fifteen were sent by Camberwell S.D.F. Altogether there were forty-six London collectors. In the provinces Wisbech sent over three hundred signatures collected by women members of the Peace Society branch. There were large numbers from Norwich, Hull and Birmingham where the collectors were former members of the Transvaal Committee. The minister of a Unitarian Church in Darlington sent forty-five signatures. There were eighty six collectors in the provinces including twelve clergymen. There was no indication as to which of the two memorials had been used, but the second more moderate document might have gained the most widespread response.

Stead was also laying the nucleus of a new anti-war movement by asking all who opposed the war to write to him. (1) One person in each town was required as a focal point of activity; next a small group of sympathisers could be formed and literature distributed from door to door. (2)

(1) Ibid, 20th October 1899.

(2) Ibid, 10th, 17th, 24th November 1899.

These quiet beginnings coalesced in 1900 into two national organisations. The Stop the War Committee was specifically promoted by Stead and founded at a conference on 13th January at Exter Hall, called by Silas Hocking, a Primitive Methodist minister and at that time Liberal candidate for the Camborne Division of Cornwall. The secretary was W.M. Crook of the Echo, and the treasurer a Liberal Alfred Marks. On the Committee were Rev. W. Urwick, G.H. Farris editor of Concord, Frank Smith of the L.C.C. and Mrs Fisher Unwin, wife of the publisher. (1) There was also a selection of Nonconformist clergymen and representatives from provincial towns, - W.P. Byles a radical printer from Bradford, Arnold Lupton a Leeds Liberal, Miss Hawson of Gateshead Liberal Association, Rev. C. Aked from Liverpool, Rev. E. A. Davies a Primitive Methodist minister from Leighton Buzzard and Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell from Rochdale. The only M.Ps. on the Committee were Lloyd George and R. Souttar. The composition of the Committee was a mixture of radical Liberals and Nonconformists.

(1) Ibid, 19th January 1900.

It included a number of people who had been prominent in the pre-war peace activity. At first no member of Socialist or Labour organisations was formally on the Committee, but by the end of March Keir Hardie was playing an active role and a number of working men's organisations were sending delegates. Crook considered "In my opinion the best outlook for the future of Liberalism will be in a frank and friendly rapprochement with the large number of politically unattached Labour organisations." He added "It would be a delicate and difficult task." (1) But the S.T.W.C. reflected some Lib-Lab co-operation against the war.

Office were taken in the same building as the I.A.P.A. and it was decided to hold meetings where possible and especially a large gathering in London. (2) A fortnight later contributions of two and a half thousand pounds had been received, - and a manifesto drawn up which stated that the war would result in conscription and the creation of another Ireland in South Africa. (3)

(1) Bryce MSS. Box on South African War, W.M. Crook to Bryce 23rd March 1900.

(2) War against War, 19th January 1900.

(3) Ibid, 26th January 1900.

Great emphasis was laid on the distribution of literature by local groups, and indeed this activity was the only practical project in view of the difficulty of holding meetings.

The South African Conciliation Committee was rather more moderate in tone. While the S.T.W.C. manifesto called uncompromisingly for an end to the war, and stressed that it would result in heavy taxation and "hard times for the poor at home" the Conciliation Committee only purported to have a watching brief with the aim of improving relations between the British and Boers and informing the public by literature of events in South Africa. ⁽¹⁾ Its members took the view that the war ought to be ended when a suitable opportunity arose, - often taken to mean when the Boers had been driven out of British territory. The formation of a non-party committee to observe the South African situation had been suggested in October 1899, but was postponed till January 1900. ⁽²⁾ The president was Courtney and the secretary Frederick Mackarness a Liberal Unionist. ⁽³⁾ The African

(1) H.J. Wilson MSS. M.D. 2527, prospectus of the Conciliation Committee.

(2) Bryce MSS. Circular of Conciliation Committee 27th Oct. 1899.

(3) Mackarness was a solicitor who joined the Unionists on the Home Rule issue and had played no active part in politics till the Boer War. He later returned to the Liberal Party and became Liberal M.P. for Newbury in 1905.

explorer Selous was a founder member. The Committee included more M.Ps. than the S.T.W.C. - Bryce, Channing, J.E. Ellis, R.T. Reid and H.J. Wilson and also more Church Of England supporters, - the deans of Durham, Lincoln and Winchester and the Bishop of Hereford. Frederick Harrison was a member, also Herbert Spencer and H.W. Massingham. (1) There was some overlapping with the S.T.W.C., - Hocking and Clifford the Baptist leader, were members of both. The members of both organisations co-operated in meetings, - Hocking, Clark, Frederick Harrison and Channing were all present at a semi-private meeting at Felix Moschellies studio in Chelsea on 22nd February where a resolution urging immediate peace was discussed; an amendment stating that peace must be honourable to both sides, moved by a clergyman, found no supporters and his remarks were greeted with disapprobation. (2)

The majority of local branches were affiliated to the S.T.W.C. which probably received wider publicity via War against War, - some were affiliated to both organisations.

(1) War against War, 19th January 1900.

(2) Ibid, 2nd March 1900.

Nor were members of the Conciliation Committee noticeably more moderate in their opinions than the S.T.W.C. in spite of the more moderate aims. Lord St. Germans wrote indignantly to Courtney of the proceedings at the first public meeting of the Committee on 31st January, - "The names of the Queen's enemies were cheered and that of her minister hissed. Mr. Harrison's statement that he could not wish for the success of British arms was received with continued cheers as was his anticipation of the hostile interference of foreign nations at no distant date." (1) A member of the audience at a meeting in July protested, "During the playing of the national anthem on the organ, many persons ostentatiously kept on their hats, hissed and hooted and actually broke out into singing the Marseillaise." (2)

The grand effort of the S.T.W.C. was the 2nd March afternoon and evening meetings in Exeter Hall. There were a number of Liberal and Labour speakers, - Hardie, Cremer, Stead, Hocking, Lawson and Nonconformist ministers. (3) This meeting was attacked by a crowd of jingoes "some

(1) Courtney MSS. Lord St. Germans to Courtney 4th February 1900.

(2) Ibid, T.K. Anderson to Courtney 19th July 1900.

(3) War against War, 9th March 1900.

carried knives, others bludgeons, while others used improvised swords of hoop iron." (1) Only the S.D.F. stewards saved the meeting from the onslaught until Cremor's appeal at Bow Street succeeded in bringing the police.

Most of the successful London peace committees were in the working class areas. Battersea was especially active. The peace committee here owed nothing to John Burns but had been formed by C. Parsons and E. Longman of the Battersea Labour League, and Trades Council. (2) It had close connections with the S.D.F. - in March Hyndman was asked to speak at an open air meeting after Burns had ignored the invitation. (3) This was one of the few places where open air meetings could be held successfully. The S.T.W.C. here also circulated the whole electoral district with leaflets and placards.

In Brixton the S.T.W.C. was chaired by the Liberal writer J.G. Godard; it had a large membership, - seventy by the end of March, distributed literature and got signatures to a petition which was circulating at

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid. 9th February 1900.

(3) John Burns MSS. ADD.MSS.46,292, E. Longman to Burns 14th March & 25th March 1900.

this time. (1) There was a committee at Shoreditch associated with the Hyndman meeting at Shoreditch Town Hall on 9th April, where George Lanabury presided over an audience of fifteen hundred people consisting "almost wholly of working men and women." S.D.F. stewards kept order and a peace resolution passed by a large majority. (2)

The S.D.F. meetings were particularly successful in London , - viz Hyndman's 12th February meeting at Mile End Vestry. A series of S.D.F. meetings was planned for four Sundays in March at Holborn Town Hall and only prevented by the building being closed by the local authority owing to fear of disturbance and damage. (3) S.D.F. stewards were usually up to coping with jingoes. The I.L.P. and S.D.F. held some successful meetings at Highbury Corner, though one was dispersed by the police. (4)

Hackney peace union was mentioned in War against War as an especially active committee, - it held some

(1) War against War, 23 d March 1900.

(2) Star, 10th April 1900.

(3) Justice, 18th February 1900.

(4) War against War, 9th, 16th March 1900.

open air meetings in Victoria Park in June, - one of these was attacked by jingoes, but the meetings were resumed in July. The Peace Union included the local S.D.F. I.L.P., Labour Council and Temperance Society. (1) Bethnal Green Radical Club held a successful meeting in February with a working class audience. Will Crook and Victor Fisher spoke and three resolutions were carried urging a fair settlement of the war and an investigation into the Jameson Raid. (2) Meetings were organised at Paddington Liberal and Radical Club and at Hensal Town Hall. (3)

Stead by the beginning of February had the names of over three hundred people willing to take an active part in peace activity. By Summer 1900 there were forty towns outside London which had some peace organisation. But in many cases this was very nominal ; only twenty towns in England actually attempted some peace activity. Seven were in Lancashire, - in Manchester and Salford the Transvaal Committee had declined from its former leading role and

(1) New Age, 6th September 1900.

(2) War against War, 23rd February 1900.

(3) 16th March 1900, Ibid.

and most work was carried on by the S.D.F. with Brocklehurst playing a leading part. ⁽¹⁾ The Liverpool Conciliation Committee had John Brunner M.P. the owner of a chemical works, as its chairman, and included I.L.P. members. ⁽²⁾ It had links with the 1899 peace movement via the Rev. C. Aked whose Baptist congregation distributed leaflets, ⁽³⁾ and Rev. A. Armstrong. By July the Committee had almost eight hundred members and held a successful meeting with Courtney and Maddison, kept in order by stewards. ⁽⁴⁾

Other Lancashire peace organisations existed at Blackpool, Southport, Oldham and Rochdale.

There was only one peace committee in the north-east at Gateshead organised by the local Liberals. Spence Watson played an important part and the committee had the support of the Anglican Dean Kitchin. But the Imperialism of the region prevented the committee from achieving any progress till July when members were found addressing meetings on the quayside in Newcastle. ⁽⁵⁾

(1) Justice, 20th February 1900.

(2) Labour Leader, 10th March 1900.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Cronwright-Schreiner, The land of free speech, London 1906, p.217.

(5) New Age, 31st May, July 1900.

In the Midlands there were peace organisations at Birmingham, Leicester, Northampton and Derby, - and a fairly inactive one at Wolverhampton. The Birmingham Committee with much the same membership of Quakers and Liberals as in 1899 engaged in quite circumspect activity with a quiet ticket meeting for Courtney on 10th February. (1) The Leicester organisation included both Liberals and Socialists, but suffered from the split in Leicester Liberalism between anti-war sections and Imperialists. At Northampton there was an uneasy alliance between Labouchere and the Liberals and the local S.D.F. (2)

In the South of England there were S.T.W. Committees or Conciliation Committees at Gloucester, Thornbury (near Gloucester) organised by the I.L.P., Portsmouth, Ryde on the Isle of Wight, Leighton Buzzard and Croydon where R. v. J. Page Hopps took the lead helped by Captain A. Carpenter brother of Edward Carpenter of Sheffield. (3)

(1) Daily Argus, 12th February 1900.

(2) Justice, 17th February 1900.

(3) Cronwright Schreiner, Op cit, p.230.

At Wisbech and Kings Lynn there was some peace activity connected with the Quakers and the Peace Society. (1)

At Tunbridge Wells the Conciliation Committee was started by a Liberal Councillor Lawson Dodd. (2) The Reading Committee was also run by a section of Liberals though other Liberals disassociated themselves from it. (3) There were peace committees at Hastings, Great Yarmouth, Bath, Bournemouth, Maidstone and Bristol - where Socialists did most of the work.

There were five active Yorkshire peace committees in Sheffield, Leeds, Bradford, York and Scarborough. In the last two towns the Rowntree family played an important part. In Bradford the committee was formed by W.P. Byles who stood as Labour candidate for East Leeds in the 1900 election, - the I.L.P. were active here as well. The Leeds Committee included some, though by no means all, of the local Liberals and co-operated to some degree with the I.L.P.

The Sheffield Conciliation Committee illustrates the problems of carrying on peace activity in the first

(1) War against War, 9th February 1900.

(2) Cronwright Schreiner, Op cit, p.253.

(3) Justice, 10th February 1900.

few months of 1900. The Committee was formed on 29th - 30th March as a result of two meetings called by H.J. Wilson. (1) Its members included a few Liberals and Nonconformist ministers. This committee formally merged with the old Transvaal Committee and consisted of roughly the same people. Wilson was assiduous in circulating anti-war propaganda to unconverted Liberals; he arranged for the Morning Leader and the Speaker to be circulated to Liberal clubs and to individual Sheffield Liberals at his own expense. (2) Wilson in 1902 estimated his total costs for propaganda in the Holmfirth constituency alone, at £255. (3) His own speech to his constituents at Penistone in January was circulated. But possibly its impact was reduced by a rival Conservative pamphlet published shortly afterwards which brought up the suzerainty question and the oppression of natives in the Transvaal and stigmatised Wilson for having voted with the Irish M.Ps. in 1899. (4)

Cronwright Schreiner as part of his speaking tour had

(1) H.J. Wilson MSS. M.D. 2506, Diary of events 1899-1902.

(2) Ibid.

(3) M.D. 2527, propaganda in the Holmfirth constituency.

(4) MD. 2522, material on the Holmfirth constituency, pamphlet.

arranged to address a meeting in Sheffield on 10th March, but this was called off due to threats of disturbance. Wilson however organised two secret meetings, one for Holmfirth Liberal Council and one at Osgathorpe. (1)

There were no further meetings but the Conciliation Committee made a house to house distribution of literature in August covering an estimated five sevenths of the town. (2) Wilson himself was in demand as a public speaker in other towns.

The Sheffield party was completely Liberal orientated and did not collaborate with the small Socialist group in the city. It never included the majority of Liberals however, - only just over one hundred people attended the meetings to form the Committee. Even in a membership drive only one hundred and eighty Liberals were circulated. A successful public meeting could not be held in Sheffield and Schreiner's visit was kept a dark secret, even from Liberals on the Holmfirth Executive, for fear of jingo demonstrations. In spite of

(1) M.D. 2506.

(2) Ibid.

Wilson's and Maddison's efforts little headway was made. This was confirmed in the 1900 election when Maddison lost his seat and Wilson's majority was reduced. Sheffield showed the limitations of even highly enthusiastic peace activity in face of local press hostility and Liberal disunity.

The typical composition of a peace committee was an amalgam of Liberals and Socialists with a few Nonconformist ministers. The alliance between Liberals and Labour for the purposes of combatting the war could be an uneasy one between two groups who had little in common but anti-Imperialism, (see below). The Liberals also had to cope with the danger of a split in their own party. The Lib-Lab alliance worked most effectively for the peace movement in London. In other towns it was difficult to hold meetings and even the distribution of literature might not be easily accomplished. Channing related some of the difficulties, - "At first the Liberal branches distributed it. Then my own messengers. Finally an old supporter wrote that my messenger was asked to leave "no more literature" perhaps not too politely. " (1)

(1) F.A. Channing, Op cit, p.235.

Literature was important since most other forms of activity were impossible to the peace party. There was a proliferation of anti-war pamphlets including a number published by the Morning Leader variously entitled "Why the Boers armed", "Pushful diplomacy", "The Uitlander grievances" and the "Chamberlain Raid". Total sales of these by the beginning of January were reported to have reached a quarter of a million. ⁽¹⁾ The main lines of the anti-war case are summed up in Hobson's The War in South Africa, published in 1900. It was important to assert that the Boers had only armed in self defence after the Jameson Raid, that there was no conspiracy for a Dutch South Africa and that the Transvaal had been forced into war as a result of Chamberlain's diplomacy. Hobson claimed that the franchise problem could have been settled peacefully, but that the British Government had been intent on a war of domination. He thus recognised supremacy as one of the main motives for the war. But on the other hand the interests of the Rand capitalists were stressed, - in terms of the desire for higher profits and cheap native labour. "We are fighting in order to

(1) See Star, 6th, 8th, 10th, 13th, January 1900.

place a small international oligarchy of mine owners and speculators in power at Pretoria." This case could appeal equally to Liberals or Socialists. H.J. Wilson expressed similar views declaring that the Uitlander problem was exaggerated and denying the Boer conspiracy. Schreiner's analysis was very similar to that of Hobson. Neither the peace party nor the Imperialists mentioned the native question very often. The promotion of native rights was largely left to the A.P.S. ⁽¹⁾ and the Native Races Committee which overlapped with it in membership.

National activity against the war included a manifesto desiring a speedy end to the war, from "Men of light and learning". This was intended as an intellectuals protest organised by James Sully, Professor of Philosophy at University College London, on the suggestion of Bryce. ⁽²⁾ Only eleven signatures had been collected by the end of December 1899, - a reflection of the anti-Boer feelings promoted by the early reverses, - Sully wrote "I fear that that checks and reverses to our troops are making even

(1) C.O. 417/313, South Africa Miscellaneous 2nd April-21st August 1900, A.P.S. to C.O. 11th May & 4th July.

(2) Bryce MSS. Box on South African War, Sully to Bryce October 1899-March 1900.

those who do not approve of the war, too sore to sign anything at the moment which may look like a "pro-Boer" manifesto." (1) One Professor requested to sign wanted "to embody a patriotic wish for the success of our army." (2) By 14th March fifty seven signatures had been laboriously collected, - though not all were as illustrious as Sully would have liked, - they included a few obscure lady auth^{or}resses for instance. The final list contained the names of Frederick Harrison, Herbert Spencer, Walter Crane, academics from Oxford, Cambridge and London and six signatures from Aberystwyth University. (3)

There was also a women's manifesto and one or two petitions for signature, - which were not particularly successful, - only three or four thousand signatures were mentioned. (4)

National peace activity did not revive till the end of May when the British victories brought the annexation issue to the front. Annexation could unite a number of people who had been cautious while the Boers were still

(1) Ibid, Sully to Bryce 11th December 1899.

(2) Ibid, Sully to Bryce 29th November 1899.

(3) Ibid, Sully to Bryce 14th March 1900.

(4) War against War, 30th March 1900.

on British territory. A national memorial against annexation was underway in July, with sheets for signatures available from the S.T.W.C. or Conciliation Committee. (1) A quarter of a million signatures were confidently predicted but no list was published and no further reference made to the memorial in the anti-war press. The visit of the Dutch delegates to London in July provided the basis for a round of meetings.

One reason why peace activity was not very successful in 1900 was the jingo sentiment of a large section of the population. But there was also lack of enthusiasm for peace activity among Liberals and Nonconformists who might have been expected to form the backbone of the anti-war movement. There was in fact a great opting out by a majority of Liberals in 1900. The few who remained, failed to effectively arouse public opinion.

It could not be disguised that the party, in spite of attempts to conceal the fact, was split over Imperialism in general and the Boer War as a particular

(1) New Age, 19th July 1900.

instance of this. This could be placed against a background of the general decline of Liberalism since 1885 under the blows of Socialism on the one hand, and the attraction of Conservatism for the wealthy and aristocratic on the other. The Liberals had lost heavily in the urban constituencies, - especially in London and Lancashire since, 1885. Their laissez faire programme of social reform appeared old fashioned in comparison with the collectivist policies envisaged by Fabians, Chamberlainites or Liberal Imperialists of the Haldane mould. Gladstonians felt that "true" Liberalism was incompatible with Imperialism as displayed in the Boer War, - "Men thoroughly imbued with the Gladstonian tradition shrink from the task of extinguishing two Republics, however serious their quarrel with Great Britain. And it is in the criticism - and, if necessary, the limitation - of militant Imperialism, not in its active forwarding, that the obvious mission, the real use of Liberalism lies." (1) Apart from ideological

(1) National Review, June 1900, H.W. Massingham, "The decline of Liberalism" pp.560-8, p.563.

considerations there was the danger that an Imperialist Liberalism would be only a pale imitation of the Conservative Party with no distinguishing features.

But at the same time even the anti-war section recommended not the destruction of Imperialism, but a Liberal approach to the phenomenon, - "...the problems of Imperial extension can never be worked without a fearless application of free institutions and of a tolerant enlightened spirit." (1) Liberalism based its case on the Imperialism of self governing colonies and the benevolent extension of British modes of government. Hence J.M. Robertson's condemnation of the Boer War, entitled Wrecking the Empire. (2) All most Liberals could do was to counterpoise a true Imperialism against a false and dangerous one.

The issues were confused by the fact that the Boer War was an example of both old and new Imperialism. It was an attempt to federate the more backward Dutch regions of South Africa with the self-governing Cape

(1) Ibid, p. 568.

(2) London 1901.

and Natal colonies, an aim which few Liberals would have disagreed with had it been peacefully accomplished. On the other hand the interests of financial speculation in the Transvaal goldfields gave the war the appearance of a blatant grab for economic profits. But few Liberals had been really pro-Boer before October 1899 and the invasion of Natal was hard to justify or to reconcile with an image of peace loving farmers. Many Liberals then, became equivocal, criticising the details of the conduct of war or reserving their comments for the final settlement which seemed imminent by the Summer of 1900. Some like Dilke, who were no jingoes, kept silent about the war, - "Sir Charles disapproved of the Boer War but he held that when the country was seized by war fever, interposition was useless." (1) Even Gladstonians like J.G. Rogers were convinced that the balance in the Liberal Party had swung over to a variant of Imperialism, - "This national) cannot isolate itself from the world and restrict its concern to the inhabitants of these islands. They are the centre of a vast Empire

(1) S. Gwynn & G. Tuckwell, Life of Right Hon. Sir Charles Dilke, London 1917, p.496.

the disintegration of which would be a positive calamity, not only for themselves but for the human race." (1)

These were the typical tones of the Liberal variety of humanitarian and civilizing Imperialism. Rogers placed the more committed anti-Imperialists in a minority if not on the defensive, - "The Liberal Party is not made up of Little Englanders though it is bound to give a place to Little Englanders in its ranks if they desire to serve there." (2)

The opponents of the Boer War were indeed a minority of the Liberal Party. Of the one hundred and eighty nine Liberal and Radical M.Ps. in the House of Commons 1899-1900, only about thirty six could be placed in the hard core of opposition to the war. Not all of these played an active part in the peace movement. This assessment is based largely on voting in three significant divisions, - the Irish amendment to the Address proposed by Dillon on 17th October when Parliament reassembled, calling for immediate peace proposals; Philip Stanhope's amendment on 19th October deprecating

(1) Nineteenth Century, October 1899, J.G. Rogers, "Liberalism and its cross currents", pp.527-540.

(2) Ibid, p.538.

the Government's conduct of negotiations with the Transvaal; and Lawson's proposal on 25th July 1900 that Chamberlain's salary be reduced. Dillon's amendment was considered ultra unpatriotic and the nineteen Liberals who voted for it were vociferously attacked as traitors in the Conservative press. Stanhope's amendment attracted much wider support on a general condemnation of Conservative Imperial policy. Ninety three Liberals voted for it, forty Irish members including T.P. O'Connor Nationalist M.P. for a Liverpool division and one Liberal Unionist, - Courtney. Of the Liberals fifty eight were English M.Ps., twenty two Scottish - over half of the Scottish Liberals, and thirteen Welsh M.Ps. - half of the Welsh Liberals. Lawson's amendment received much less support, - only thirty two Liberals voted for it. A hard core of anti-war Liberal M.Ps. can be pinpointed by including those who voted for two out of three of these amendments. This gives a total of thirty four M.Ps. Nine of these sat for Scottish constituencies, G.B. Clark and J McLeod for Highland constituencies, Bryce for Aberdeen and T.R. Buchannan for East Aberdeenshire, R. T. Reid and R. Souttar for Dumfries and Dumfriesshire,

Morley M.P. for Montrose Burghs, T. Shaw M.P. for Hawick Burghs and W. Wedderburn M.P. for East Danffshire.

These M.Ps. however had little effect on the peace movement in Scotland. Morley played no part in the agitation outside the House of Commons. (1) Clark was opposed

by the majority of his constituents, - army service was a usual occupation in the Highlands. (2) Aberdeen peace

activity was organised by the S.D.F. and owed little to

Bryce. (3) Peace Committees in Edinburgh and Glasgow

comprised only a small section of Liberals, and in

Dundee a leading part was played by Rev. Walter Walsh

a Unitarian minister. (4) On the other hand three

other Scottish M.Ps. Richard Haldane, Henry Asquith

and J. Munro-Ferguson the chief Scottish Whip, could be

placed in the Imperialist camp; they had an extra

significance in that they were front rank Liberal

spokesmen and potential ministers in a Liberal administration.

Munro-Ferguson disclosed his opinions in a letter to

(1) Francis W. Hirst, In the Golden Days, London 1947, p.206.

(2) Henry Pelling, The Political Geography of British Elections, 1967, p.382.

(3) Justice, 26th May 1900.

(4) Cronwright Schreiner, Op cit, p.120.

Herbert Gladstone in October 1899, - "That Parliamentary Enquiry (into the Jameson Raid) was a national disgrace and Joe's diplomacy the chief blunder of the Government. I quite think we might have had to fight the Dutch anyhow, but our record is as bad as theirs and that doesn't look well for people in our position." (1) His main quarrel was over methods of achieving British supremacy in South Africa. Nine other Scottish Liberals could be identified as Imperialists.

Four Welsh Liberal M.P.s. voted for at least two of the amendments, - Lloyd George (Carnarvon Boroughs), Bryn Roberts (Carnarvonshire Eifon), J.H. Lewis (Flint), and A. C. Humphreys Owen (Montgomery). The three official S.T.W. Committees at Brecon, Wrexham and Pontypool did little to oppose the war. Most work was done by Lloyd George and Bryn Roberts who held stormy meetings in Bangor and Carnarvon in April supported by some Liberals and Nonconformist ministers. (2) Local Liberalism in Wales had been disintegrating since 1895 and had lost a good

(1) Herbert Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS.46,052, Munro-Ferguson to Gladstone 11th October 1899.

(2) War against War, 20th April, 1st June 1900.

deal of its earlier impetus. But the Welsh language press and Welsh Nonconformity were against the war, ⁽¹⁾ and "In every Welsh town and village there were conspicuous pro-Boers to be met." ⁽²⁾

In the north-east of England the miners Lib-Lab M.Ps. formed a nucleus of opposition to the war, - Burt, Fenwick, Atherley Jones and John Wilson voted for two of the amendments. Anti-war M.Ps. were found in the rural and mining constituencies. In the towns there was a predominance of Imperialism, - led by Sir Edward Grey M.P. for Berwick on Tweed and supported by W.S. Robson the barrister M.P. for South Shields, C.M. Palmer owner of a local shipbuilding company M.P. for Jarrow, and J.M. Paulton M.P. for Bishop Auckland.

Of twenty-six Yorkshire M.Ps., eleven voted for Stanhope but only H.J. Wilson, Maddison and T.R. Leuty M.P. for East Leeds supported the other amendments. Leuty resigned before the 1900 election and the other Leeds Liberal M.Ps. J.L. Walton and Herbert Gladstone were equivocal. Some of the M.Ps. for the industrial, mining

(1) K.O. Morgan On cit. p.179.

(2) W. Watkin Davies, Lloyd George 1863-1914, London 1939, p.171.

and Nonconformist constituencies of Huddersfield, Pudsey, Spen Valley, Pontefract and Normanton, were marginally anti-war. On the other hand Sir James Kitson M.P. for Colne Valley, iron and steel manufacturer and President of Leeds Chamber of Commerce, was strongly Imperialist.

In Lancashire there were only twelve Liberal seats, the Conservatives having made considerable headway in the boroughs owing to traditional hostility between the working class and middle class Liberal industrialists. ⁽¹⁾ There were four anti-Imperialists, - J. Duckworth and F. Cawley M.Ps. for Prestwich and Middleton in the Manchester area, C.F. Scott and Stanhope M.P. for Burnley. But George Harwood at Bolton, A. Emmott at Oldham, Kay Shuttleworth at Clitheroe and J. F. Leese at Accrington were all supporters of the Government.

Of the nine London Liberal M.P.s six voted for Stanhope. Four voted for one of the other amendments, - the Lib-Labs John Burns, T. Pickersgill, W.T. Steadman and T. Lough, who sat for working class constituencies. Burns, though he voted in all the divisions was wary of taking part in the peace movement until he was certain

(1) Victorian Studies, Vol 7, 1963-4, James Cornford, "The transformation of Conservatism in the late 19th century."

that meetings would not be broken up, - he did not speak for Battersea S.T.W.C till May.

Labouchere, J.E. Ellis, Lawson, Channing and John Brunner complete the list of anti-war M.Ps. They were a mixture of Lib-Labs from London and the north-east (Henry Broadhurst was the only Lib-Lab who take not take an active anti-war stand), and the more old-fashioned radicals, - Labouchere Channing. Maddison and Stanhope for instance were directly at odds with Labour interests. Wilson, Ellis and Brunner were industrial entrepreneurs who had little in common with Labour groups. Lawson especially was out dated in his concern for temperance reform. A large section of the anti-Imperialists expressed the out moded values of mid-century Liberalism, Nonconformity and individualism. Only the Lib-Labs and Lloyd George embraced more modern ideas on the role of the state and social reform. The alliance between the Liberals and Socialists during the Boer War was doomed to be unsatisfactory.

The anti-war group in Parliament was small but it also failed to make much impact in the constituencies,

No Liberal Association ran its own peace committee and only a minority of Liberals belonged to peace organisations. The keynote of most local Liberal Associations was division. A writer in the Primrose League Gazette asked twelve Liberals in Stockport how they would vote in the next General Election if their Liberal candidate was of the Bryce or Morley stamp, - six said they would vote for the Conservative, two would abstain and four vote Liberal. ⁽¹⁾ This sample was no doubt biased but it illustrates the differences of opinion in Liberalism.

In Scotland Clark met with a good deal of opposition in Caithness, - Herbert Gladstone received a report on the situation, from J.A. Murray Macdonald, - "Met a very good class of leading men in considerable numbers at Wick and Thurso. All dead against Clark, - so hot that they'd only talk of candidates. This we declined to discuss and in time both meetings came, we thought, to see that the only line to take was the formation of a regular representative County Association.... We did our best to get at Clark's leading men and we got the names of one

(1) Primrose League Gazette, April 1900.

or two, but they lived so far from the main centres that our efforts to reach them failed." (1) Sure enough the Caithness Liberals adopted L. Harnsworth, the brother of the proprietor of the Daily Mail and of an impeccably Imperialist viewpoint, to stand as candidate in the 1900 election.

Bryce received letters from Liberals containing conflicting opinions on the war. An anonymous Glasgow Liberal signed himself "Imperialist" and warned "The proof of the plot is overwhelming..the great Liberal Party will be extinguished unless wiser councils than yours prevail." (2) But some of his constituents approved of his anti-war stand, - one of them blamed the war on the South African Company, - "a set of selfish cunning men." (3)

Divisions in Sheffield Liberalism came to the fore when Maddison was re-adopted as candidate in August. Two or three of the speakers at the meeting stated that they disagreed with him over the war, and implied that

(1) Herbert Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS. 46,058, J.A. Murray Macdonald to Gladstone 1st July 1900.

(2) Bryce MSS. Box on South African War, letter dated 9th February 1900.

(3) Ibid, letters of 16th, 17th November 1899.

he was only acceptable because of his sound views on land reform, labour legislation, education and Nonconformity. (1) Maddison himself in his manifesto admitted that his views were not shared by all his supporters. (2) In spite of an imposing programme of social reforms and election cards bearing a picture of Gladstone with the caption "vote for Maddison and the Grand Old Man" he was defeated by almost a thousand votes.

On the other hand anti-Imperialists found themselves opposed to their M.Ps. J. F. Thomasson of Bolton refused to send a cheque for Gladstone's election fund writing, "I am just refusing to nominate George Harwood for Bolton though quite prepared to vote for him...as the nominee of the Liberal Party. But I can't attach any other meaning to his vote for Chamberlain's salary than a vote of confidence in Chamberlain and that I can't swallow." He added "Fortunately there will be no contest." (3) A peace resolution was put before Bolton

(1) H.J. Wilson MSS. M.D.2512, Brightside Division.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Herbert Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS.46,058, letter of 23rd September 1900.

Liberal Association in March had to be withdrawn since no unanimity could be obtained; it was urged by opponents of the resolution that the Boers were still on British territory and the time was not ripe for negotiations. (1)

Silas Hocking the Liberal candidate for the mining constituency of Camborne in South west Cornwall was compelled to resign on account of his anti-war views. He wrote to the local paper, "From representations made to me, I understand that my attitude relative to the Transvaal war is deeply resented by the Liberal Party." (2)

The new Liberal candidate W.S. Caine, advocated the annexation of the Republics "to consolidate the great Empire of which we as Englishmen are justly proud." (3)

Bristol Liberal Club writing to ask Gladstone to be the president remarked "John Morley has been president since the Club's formation in 1887, but his views on the war are not acceptable to the bulk of the members." (4)

The S.T.W.C. at Leighton Buzzard had little Liberal support. The local M.P. T.G. Ashton, speaking to South

(1) Manchester Guardian, 17th March 1900.

(2) Cornubian and Redruth Times, 2nd March 1900.

(3) Ibid, 28th September 1900.

(4) Herbert Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS. 46,023, letter from R.H. Davies.

Bedfordshire Liberal Association, said that although the war could have been avoided, the Boers must be defeated before peace could be made. (1) Ashton had voted for Stanhope's amendment and attended a meeting of Liberals to form the League against aggression and militarism, but his basic views on the war differed little from those of his Conservative opponent.

At Yarmouth the Liberals were divided, - after a peace demonstration a threatening crowd gathered outside the Liberal and Radical Club but they did it an injustice since many of its members were reported "to be disassociated from anti-war opinions and hold strict Imperialist views in respect of the present conflict in South Africa." (2)

At Reading the Liberal Party was accused of organising a peace meeting but the president of the Liberal Association wrote to the press strongly denying any sympathy with the peace party. (3) The Liberal M.P. for the area G. Palmer abstained in all divisions on the war.

Ellis did not get very far with the Liberals in

(1) Leighton Buzzard Observer, 27th March 1900.

(2) Morning Leader, 17th March 1900.

(3) Reading Observer, 16th March 1900.

the Rushcliffe division of Nottinghamshire. He wrote that there two extreme sections of pro- and anti-war Liberals, and "between them lies a body which desires the success of our arms but has no strong conviction as to the merits of the war and certainly no formed judgement as to the details of the settlement." (1)

And in another letter, - "The average elector after all is very little acquainted with the facts. But I was gratified to find an open mind to an extent I had not anticipated. Literature was welcomed..But to have precipitated a resolution (of almost any kind) at the moment would have been mischievous to the last degree... the elector with a lot of John Bull instinct that we must be right is yet rather bewildered." (2) Ellis behaved as though his Liberal constituents could almost certainly be expected to take an Imperialist stand. The picture of the puzzled voter is very like that described by Bryce in Aberdeen in November 1899, and Schreiner confirmed the belief in the general ignorance of the average voter as to the facts of the South African situation.

(1) Herbert Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS.46,058, Ellis to Gladstone 7th April 1900.

(2) Campbell-Bannerman MSS. ADD.MSS.41,214, Ellis to Campbell-Bannerman 7th April 1900.

F.A. Channing likewise found at a meeting in November that his constituents were largely opposed to his views on the war, though they supported him on general Liberal issues. (1)

There was an attempt to unseat Labouchere at Northampton. The Conservatives made an informal offer to the Liberals, - with Liberal Imperialist connivance, - to run no Conservative candidate if a Councillor Tonsley the chairman of the Liberal Association, stood in Labouchere's place. (2) This attempt was defeated by the general Liberal enthusiasm for Labouchere. A letter to the local press read "My view on the war is not the same as Mr. Labouchere's and yet I in common with most Radicals should feel personally humiliated if Northampton turns him out." (3)

Leicester Liberals largely kept silent on the war, though they expressed appreciation of the services of Morley and Courtney in trying to avert war.

The change in the attitudes of many Radicals was

(1) F.A. Channing, Op cit, p.233.

(2) Northampton Daily Reporter, 18th September 1900.

(3) Ibid, 17th September 1900.

illustrated by the case of Henry Brand Viscount Hampden who in 1880 "was a Gladstonian Radical M.P. of the most advanced non-intervention type.." but in 1900 was arguing vehemently in favour of the war. (1) In the same way Henry Fowler a Wesleyan Methodist and M.P. for Wolverhampton was declaring in 1900 that the war was the culmination of the Boer designs against the British Empire, - if the Empire "should be in peril from stress or storm it can summon to its defence a vast army of men of every class and creed and clime who are proud of their allegiance to the one flag and the one throne." (2) A Conservative M.P. could hardly have been more Imperialistic.

In direct contrast to this some Liberals bemoaned the passing of the old non-interventionist principles,- "How vast a loss of moral force has there been since the death of Gladstone. If he had been in the field this war would not have been possible." (3)

A common attitude in Liberal associations was

(1) W.S. Blunt, Diaries, Vol 1, p.460.

(2) Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Fowler M.P. Speech at the banquet to service volunteers at Wolverhampton Town Hall 16th February 1900. p.16.

(3) Bryce MSS. Box on South African War, letter from "A Liberal" 13th December 1899.

reticence so as not to precipitate differences of opinion and disunity. Very few resolutions were passed by Liberal Associations on the war. A correspondent of Kate Courtney wrote from Stockport that in the election campaign most Liberals tried to avoid discussion of the war, while most Liberal voters, though opposed to jingoism, thought the war inevitable, - this was even true of radicals with advanced ideas on social reform. (1)

Women's Liberal Associations were the most outspoken against the war. The only official Liberal meetings addressed by Schreiner apart from that at Penistone, were arranged by Women's Liberal groups. The Northern Women's Liberal Association, representing up to thirty branches, passed a resolution by a large majority urging that any peace settlement should preserve the independence of the two Republics. (2)

The desire to avoid controversy was manifest at the National Liberal Federation meeting at Nottingham on 27th and 28th March. There were a thousand delegates present from five hundred Associations and twenty-one M.Ps.

(1) Courtney MSS. G. Unwin to Kate Courtney 23rd September 1900.

(2) Star, 26th January 1900.

including nine from the anti-war section. Following an anti-war speech by Spence Watson, C. Trevelyan M.P. for the Elland division of Yorkshire expounded on the necessity for compelling the Boers to unite in a South African federation. Dr. Lunn one of the few Wesleyan anti-Imperialists, however declared that the report of the executive contained nothing but platitudes on the war and ought to be revised to express true Liberal principles. But even Lloyd George asked Lunn not to create disunity by urging the delegates to vote against the report. A compromise resolution was passed condemning the Government's diplomacy, but declaring that the Boers were a good deal to blame for the war. (1) That evening the delegates were addressed by Edward Grey. The next day the Imperialists tried to get a resolution passed expressing appreciation of the colonies for their help in the war, but this was declared out of order. (2) An observer summed up the tone of the Conference, - "As regards the rank and file there is no manner of doubt

(1) Times, 28th March 1900.

(2) Ibid, 29th March 1900.

that their sentiments were strongly in favour of the old traditions; they listened in respectful silence to the adroit speech of Sir E. Grey, but were only enthusiastic when anti-jingo sentiments (scarce alas) were interspersed. But as regards the leaders, all was Union Jack and big guns, and I could not but feel that what Dr. Spence Watson said was true, that there was no difference of opinion between them and the present Government." (1)

This does not coincide with the picture of grass roots opinion given by M.P.s of their constituencies. Possibly more of the anti-war Liberals attended the conference, or perhaps they normally hesitated to denounce the war in the prevailing jingoistic atmosphere. Not many Liberals however played an active part in the organised peace movement.

Outside Parliament there were a few Liberal writers, journalists etc. who mobilised against the war. In February the League of Liberals against Aggression and Militarism was formed from a conference at the Westminster Palace Hotel, with A. Marshall the novelist as its secretary. (2) Besides M.P.s, its members included

(1) Bryce MSS. Box on South African War, Baron Farrer to Bryce, 30th March 1900.

(2) F.W. Hirst, Op cit, p.193.

F.W. Hirst who had helped Morley with his life of Gladstone, J.A. Hobson, H.N. Brailsford, G.P. Gooch, G.W.E. Russell and Frederick Harrison. Members of the Hobhouse family played a special role in the peace movement, L.T. Hobhouse was a leader writer for the Manchester Guardian and Emily Hobhouse visited South Africa in 1901 to report on conditions in the concentration camps. There were also journalists and editors, - Massingham, Crook, H. Rylett editor of New Age and W.M. Tompson of Reynolds News who had been formulating plans for a revived Liberal Party incorporating some of the Socialist programme since early in 1899. The older Nonconformist Liberals were thus joined by younger writers and intellectuals.

Two to three hundred Liberals attended the 14th February conference and passed resolutions against the war denouncing it as "a crime and blunder committed at the instigation of irresponsible capitalists.." (1)

But this was the only specifically Liberal Association formed to oppose the war.

(1) War against War, 16th February 1900.

Socialists, Lib-Lab co-operation and Nonconformists.

If the Liberals were equivocal there was little doubt in the minds of contemporaries that most of the organised Socialist and working class bodies were opposed to the war. Beatrice Webb admitted "... Leonard Courtney and John Morley are acclaimed as the only honest politicians by the recognised Labour leaders who have one and all gone pro-Boer. The Fabian Society it must be admitted is completely out of it, the majority believing in the inevitability of the war whilst the minority regard the majority as being the worst kind of traitors." (1)

Schreiner remarked on the high level of working class participation in peace meetings, - his typical audience was composed of the better class of

(1) Beatrice Webb, Our Partnership, London 1948, p.200.

For an analysis of Socialist opinion and the Fabian split see also F. Bealey, The working classes and the Boer War.

working man; (1) this may have meant the politically organised working class as opposed to the amorphous mass of the jingo mobs. A writer in Justice declared that "not a single working class association or trades union has declared in favour of war." (2) The Durham M.P. John Wilson claimed that most of his constituents, three quarters of whom were miners, were opposed to the war. (3) Hodgson Pratt noted Socialists and Trades Unionists as consistently anti-war. (4) Trades Unions however played only a small part in anti-war activity; foreign policy, as had been pointed out at the T.U.C., was not something that fitted easily into a union's scope. Hodgson Pratt also noticed that among the unorganised working class there was much apathy and some support for the war. It was difficult to assess the exact state of opinion in the unorganised working class, - as a correspondent of Bryce pointed out,-

(1) Cronwrigth Schreiner, Op cit, p.315.

(2) Justice, 17th March 1900.

(3) Arbitrator, April 1900.

(4) Concord, December 1901.

"What puzzles me is the apparent indifference of the working classes. Are they I wonder as stricken with war fever as the classes above them? Unfortunately the condition of the press makes it impossible to find out what opinion is." (1)

Political and industrial attitudes were the main determining factor separating the anti-Imperialists from the rest among the working class. Those who were committed to Socialism or to Radicalism of an advanced Liberal kind were generally opposed to the war; typical of the latter variety was a Stockport engine driver described in a letter to Courtney; he took the Reynolds News and supported the Newcastle programme, "the Socialist element in his creed is vague and indeterminate," though he believed in state ownership of railways and land reform. To him the war "is a mere case of a big people crushing a little one, and his admiration of a "game" struggle against the inevitable has led him to call his dog Kruger." (2)

(1) Bryce MSS. Box on South African War, Sully to Bryce 20th December 1900.

(2) Courtney MSS. G. Unwin to Courtney 17th September 1900.

Both the S.D.F. and the I.L.P. opposed the war. The S.D.F. took the line that the war was in the interests of the capitalists who wished to gain full control of the goldfields. The war would also retard social reform by the expense which it entailed. (1) The S.D.F. was more pro-Boer than the Liberals considering that as a republic the Transvaal was more democratically governed than England; sympathy for the Dutch was equated with sympathy for the Irish and Indians, - all three were oppressed peoples under the Imperial system. Another strong point was the lack of adequate franchise in Britain. The financial Imperialism of a Rhodes-Chamberlain conspiracy to seize the goldfields was stressed and the S.D.F. were less concerned than the Liberals with the technicalities of the suzerainty issue or the negotiations.

There was an element in the S.D.F. in Lancashire which was opposed to the official policy. In the Manchester and Salford branch J. Jackson claimed that the Boers were themselves a capitalist oligarchy unfairly

(1) Justice 20th January 1900.

taxing British working class miners. (1) This opinion seems to have been held by only a minority of the branch, - at a meeting in Hulme Labour Hall where Jackson spoke, he was opposed by almost all the other S.D.F. members and an anti-war resolution was passed unanimously. (2)

There was some tendency in Burnley S.D.F. to take the view that both sides in the war were at fault and that Socialists should hold aloof from any partisanship. This was reflected in the antagonism of a large minority of the branch towards the candidature of the anti-war M.P. Philip Stanhope. (3) There was also the traditional anti-Liberal attitude of the Lancashire working class to be taken into account however. This was also one of the more successful areas of the Clarion vans and Robert Blatchford's opinions were definitely patriotic, - a typical editorial in 1900 began, - "I am not an Imperialist and never was, but I am English...and I want to see England do herself credit.." He went on to say that this involved the retention of the colonies. (4)

(1) Ibid, 13th January 1900.

(2) Ibid, 3rd February 1900.

(3) Burnley Express and Advertiser, 3rd October 1900.

(4) Clarion, 3rd February 1900.

Some S.D.F. members might have been influenced by this kind of propaganda. Hyndman himself was not free from traces of Imperialism, - in the 1870's he had "believed in the beneficent influence of the British flag and the glories of British rule all over the world, considering indeed that our expansion was good alike for governors and governed." (1)

By Summer 1901 the S.D.F. executive had decided in fact that further anti-war agitation was a waste of time and money and opted out of the anti-war campaign. (2)

But in 1900 most of the S.D.F. branches were anti-war. Clitheroe, Ashton-under-Lyne, Birmingham, Bristol, Reading and Edinburgh sent resolutions approving the official policy. (3) A number of branches made house to house distributions of the manifesto against the war. The London branches were especially active in holding meetings.

The I.L.P. were firmly united against the war. Keir Hardie went so far as to compare the Boers to the

(1) Further Reminiscences, p.151.

(2) C. Tsuzuki, H.M. Hyndman and British Socialism, London 196 , p.129.

(3) Justice, 27th January & 3rd February 1900.

free yeomen of England of two hundred years ago, and attacked the sordid commercialism of the South Africa Company. (1) As early as 21st October 1899 the I.L.P.

were considering mobilising a national anti-war agitation. (2) Readers of Labour Leader were urged to

form Conciliation Committees or S.T.W. Committees in collaboration with Liberals or local clergy, and to

organise meetings, write letters to the press and

distribute literature. (3) A Council meeting in

January passed a resolution in favour of peace and drew

up a manifesto for circulation. (4) The I.L.P. particularly

encouraged co-operation with other opponents of the

war. Hardie was a member of the S.T.W.C. and I.L.P.

members were asked to sign the petition against the

annexation of the two republics.

The section of the Labour movement the most divided was the Fabian Society. "The cleavage goes right through the Liberal Party into the Fabian Society, Shaw, Wallas and Whelan being almost in favour of the war, J.R.

(1) Labour Leader, 17th March 1900.

(2) National Administrative Council of the I.L.P. MSS. Minute Book 1899-1902, meeting held 21st October 1899.

(3) Labour Leader 17th February 1900.

(4) Minute Book 1899-1902, meeting held on 8th January 1900.

Macdonald and Sydney Oliver desperately against it, while Sidney occupies a middle position, - thinks that better management might have prevented it, but that now it has begun, recrimination is useless, and that we must face the fact that henceforth the Transvaal and the Orange Free State must be within the British Empire." (1) At a meeting in December 1899 a resolution condemning the war was narrowly defeated. A postal referendum in February to decide whether an official statement should be made on the war resulted in a majority against a statement; of eight hundred members only four hundred and seventy six voted, - two hundred and fifty nine against a pronouncement and two hundred and seventeen in favour. (2) Macdonald and thirteen other members resigned including J.F. Green, George Barnes, P. Curran, Walter Crane, S.G. Hobson and Mrs. Pankhurst.

George Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb promoted the idea of national efficiency - reform of education, factory conditions and the poor law by the state. This of course

(1) Beatrice Webb, Our Partnership, p.188.

(2) Ibid, pp. 192-3.

ran counter to the laissez faire attitudes of Gladstonian Liberals. But social reform at home was tied up with the maintenance of a powerful Empire abroad; large efficient units were vastly preferable to small weak states; small nations like the Transvaal had no right to determine their own government. ⁽¹⁾ Collectivism must also apply to the Empire and the laissez faire non-interventionist ideas should be dropped. Social reform would ensure "the rearing of an Imperial race." ⁽²⁾

The Fabians preferred the Liberal Imperialists to the Conservatives, - Rosebery and Haldane were both friends of the Webbs. Beatrice Webb wrote of the pro-war Liberals, - "These men have helped us with our undertakings, they have been appreciative of our ideas, and socially pleasant to us. They have no prejudice against our views of social reform; whilst their general attitude towards the Empire as a powerful and self-conscious force, is one with which we are in agreement." ⁽³⁾

(1) Fabianism and the Empire, a manifesto by the Fabian Society, edited by G.B.Shaw, London 1900.

(2) Nineteenth Century, September 1901, Sidney Webb, "Lord Rosebery's escape from Houndsditch" p.386.

(3) Our Partnership, p.220.

The Fabians represented more the lower middle class of civil servants, journalists and writers than the bona fide working class. They did not hesitate to point out that the anti-war attitude of the S.D.F. and I.L.P. would bring these organisations into an incongruous alliance with Liberals who on all other questions were opposed to Socialist policies.

The Lib-Lab co-operation during the Boer War was by no means complete or free from disagreement. Co-operation could operate on the very practical level of Socialist protection of Liberal meetings. At the Exeter Hall meeting on 2nd March S.D.F. stewards effectively kept the crowd at bay. After this Victor Fisher of the Transvaal Committee appealed for stewards in the Morning Leader and received over two hundred replies. ⁽¹⁾ Almost all the stewards were working men, - for example the secretary of Maidstone Trades Council wrote to John Burns, "I want to offer myself as a fighting volunteer if you are going to hold a meeting where stout gas pipes will be of use." ⁽²⁾

(1) Morning Leader 5th March 1900.

(2) Burns MSS. ADD.MSS. 46,297, Arthur Field to Burns, 14th February 1900.

Socialists might also join with Liberals in forming peace organisations. There was some co-operation in London, Northampton, Leicester, Glasgow and Edinburgh. But in Aberdeen the peace movement was run by the S.D.F. who thought that the Liberal M.Ps. had not taken a firm enough attitude to the war. The Trades Council would have preferred Labour candidates in the 1900 election, - "The Trades Council was not entirely satisfied with the Liberal attitude; it would have liked them to oppose annexation of the two Boer Republics and to be less equivocal in their public pronouncements." (1)

There were similarities in the Labour and Liberal platforms on the war; they both emphasised the capitalist designs on the goldfields and the unfortunate consequences of the war at home, - increased taxation, delay of social reform and the dangers of conscription. But on matters other than the war there were wide differences between Socialists and Liberals. Liberals and Socialists could be drawn together temporarily but soon fell apart.

The Labour Representation Committee, which could be

(1) K.D. Buckley, Trades Unionism in Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Studies, no.135, 1955, p.188.

directed as much against Liberals as Conservatives, was formed in 1900. The I.L.P. began to exert its influence in the York bye-election in January 1900, where the official Liberal candidate supported the Government's efforts to win the war. A peace committee under Hardie's auspices including Socialists and two York Liberal Quakers, - Frank Rowntree and Fielden Thorpe, - was set up to choose a rival candidate. (1) But the proposed candidate S.G. Hobson failed to appear and it seemed that some of the S.T.W.C. were opposed to the idea of separate anti-war candidates standing against Liberals. (2) The I.L.P. drew the moral that in the future they should run their own Socialist candidate independent of the Liberals. (3) At the Portsmouth bye-election in May 1900, the I.L.P. branch secretary campaigned for the Tory candidate rather than support a pro-war Liberals. (4) This was considered rather too extreme and the secretary was forced to resign.

The differences between Liberals and Labour

(1) Labour Leader 20th January 1900.
National Administrative Council of the I.L.P. Minute Book, 1899-1902, minutes of meeting of 8th January 1900.

(2) Labour Leader, 3rd February 1900.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid., 19th May 1900.

while modified by a common opposition to the war, never completely broke down. There was some opposition in the I.L.P. to Hardie's idea of a White List of Liberal candidates who were anti-war and who should be supported by Socialists. George Barnes of the A.S.E. thought that the social policies of Liberals were a more important criteria than attitudes to the war, - he wrote "I have seen a few of the leading anti-war men, and I am afraid we have little else to expect from them in our line." (1) F. Branley of Bradford Conciliation Committee who had worked with Liberals in the peace movement wrote that he could not vote for any peace advocate who did not agree with Socialist home policy. (2) In the end it was decided to leave the problem of whether to vote for Liberal peace candidates to the individual I.L.P. branches. (3)

In the Bow and Bromley bye-election in October 1899, the Liberal candidate was extremely anxious for S.D.F. support,

(1) Ibid, 11th August 1900.

(2) Ibid, 1st September 1900.

(3) I.L.P. Minute Book 1899-1902, meeting held on 29th September & meeting held on 11th October 1900.

Spender wrote to Lansbury begging for a Lib-Lab alliance to stave off defeat, - "...if we face the Government with a divided front we shall give an impression to the whole world that they are stronger than they are...Is there any possibility even at this eleventh hour that we might work together ? I would admit that if I reaped success you were mainly the reaper.... if an agreement were possible some pledge of abstinence from other fights might be given by the Liberals. Perhaps Mr. Herbert Gladstone would consent, but the time is so short..of course this is quite private, - I have not spoken to my fellows. But they will come round all right." (1)

This paved the way for Lansbury's candidature in 1900 which was supported by the Liberals.

But few alliances of this sort were possible. Maddison in Sheffield would not accept help from I.L.P. members from outside the locality and wrote "apart from the war we occupy positions which cannot be harmonised." (2)

He had also opposed the foundation of the Labour Representation Committee.

(1) Lansbury MSS. Br.Lib. Pol.Sc. Vol 1, Letter 1877-1900, Spender to Lansbury 18th October 1899.

(2) H.J. Wilson MSS. M.D.2512, Maddison to Wilson 15th September 1900.

Stanhope at Burnley was opposed by a section of the S.D.F. in the 1900 election.

The Labour Representation Committee ran fifteen candidates in the General Election and in nine cases they were opposed by a Liberal, or by some sections of the local Liberal Party.⁽¹⁾ In East Leeds for example W.P. Byles stood as a peace candidate against Rochfort Maguire a director of the South African Company, chosen by the Liberals on the resignation of T. Leuty. Byles was supported by the I.L.P. and by the Irish clubs but not by the official Liberals.⁽²⁾ In Leicester Ramsay Macdonald found himself opposed to two Liberals, Broadhurst and Hazell, though he had been invited by the Trades Council. In Manchester, Bradford and Blackburn the Liberal support for a Socialist candidate standing against Conservatives was only half-hearted. In Merthyr Tydfil, Halifax, Gower, Ashton-under-Lyne and Richdale Liberal and Labour candidates were opposed.

Lib-Lab ties were not established so firmly by

(1) I.L.P. Minute Book 1899-1902, Report of the first annual conference of the L.R.C. February 1901. List of constituencies fought with comments.

(2) Leeds Daily News, 14th, 15th, 17th September 1900.

a common anti-war attitude as has been supposed. Co-operation only included a small minority of strongly anti-war Liberals in any case. Even then, Liberal and Labour groups did not necessarily unite in anti-war activity, still less formulate a common electoral policy. The Socialists had little patience with the section of Liberal entrepreneurs and old fashioned Nonconformists of the Lawson type. They also tended to be rather contemptuous of the Liberal inability to organise meetings effectively, ; Hyndman blamed the jingo success at the Northampton meeting on the bad arrangements made by the Radicals. (1) The difficulty of finding Liberal candidates may explain why some seats, -as at Preston, - were left to the Labour Representation Committee. (2)

The uneasy and temporary nature of the Lib-Lab alliance helps to explain the relative lack of success of the peace movement. The other factor was the apathy of the Nonconformists, - traditionally one of the more anti-imperialist groups who had filled out the anti-Imperialist agitations of the 1880's.

(1) Further Reminiscences, p.418.

(2) P. Poirier, The advent of the Labour Party, London 1958, p.123.

Of the Nonconformist Churches only the Quakers officially opposed the war. The nearest thing to a collective protest was the response of ministers to an appeal by the Dutch clergy for peace negotiations which was circulating towards the end of 1899. This was a moderate, carefully phrased document, not a demand for the immediate end to the war. In six to seven weeks over two hundred and fifty signatures had been collected, - the collection was organised by a London member of the S.T.W.C. Rev. W. Urwick. (1) Two hundred and fifty nine signatures broke down into the following denominations, - ninety, over a third of the total, were from Congregationalists; forty-eight, one fifth from Baptists; forty from Primitive Methodists, twenty one from Episcopalians; nineteen from Unitarians; seventeen from Wesleyan Methodists; twelve from Presbyterians and twelve from Quakers. A large number of the signatures were from London. (2) The distribution among denominations followed the pre-war pattern of activity, with Congregationalists and Baptists very much

(1) War against War, 26th January 1900.

(2) Ibid, 16th March 1900.

in/evidence.

A few Wesleyans also came out against the war, including Dr. H.E. Lunn, Rev. G. E. Sartup and Rev. John Birtwhistle (St. Helens). (1) A number of these wrote to the press protesting against a proposed Wesleyan dinner for Chamberlain, on anti-war grounds. (2) The dinner was finally abandoned.

Among Primitive Methodists, the President of the Conference signed the appeal of the Dutch ministers; in Leighton Buzzard the S.T.W.C. was run by a Primitive Methodist minister Rev. A.E. Davies who was supported by the Quarterly Meeting; (3) and Silas Hocking of course was the leading anti-war Primitive Methodist minister. But the journal of the group was very circumspect about the war. The anniversary proceedings in May 1900 were influenced by the opinions of missionaries; the New South Wales delegate said "The great idea in the hearts of the praying men from Australia who are fighting, is that this war is a just and a reasonable war (cries of yes and no)" A minister from South Africa referring to

(1) Ibid.

(2) Morning Leader, 21st February 1900.

(3) Leighton Buzzard Observer, 13th March 1900.

the four months he had spent under "Boer blackness and oppression" got more applause than anyone else. (1)

The peace party were somewhat subdued at this conference. In August the Primitive Methodist came out in favour of annexation.

A leading Baptist minister Dr. Clifford was a member of the S.T.W.C. But Guinness Rogers the Congregationalist came out in favour of the war. He wrote "There are surely few who would deny that the issue of the Boer ultimatum rendered the maintenance of peace impossible." (2) And deprecated the peace section among the Nonconformists with their "half hearted advocacy of the case of the Boers." (3) The majority of the Baptists who wrote to the periodical were opposed to the war. (4) But some Baptist minister were noticed preaching sermons against "the corrupt Boer oligarchy"

(1) Primitive Methodist, 24th May 1900.

(2) Contemporary Review, December 1899, J.G. Rogers, "Liberal Imperialism and the Transvaal War" p.903.

(3) Ibid, May 1900, J.G. Rogers, "The Churches and the War" p.613.

(4) Baptist, 5th January 1900.

and voicing similar sentiments. (1) Some anti-war meetings were held in Bethnal Green Baptist chapel, (2) but this is the only record of meetings being held in churches or chapels. Nor were any anti-war resolutions passed by congregations or local meetings.

Before war broke out the Free Church Council had registered a mild protest. But no resolution could be passed at the annual meeting held in March 1900 at Sheffield. Hugh Price Hughes was anxious that the war should not be discussed at all, (3) the president of the Council was a Wesleyan war advocate and the Executive Committee passed a resolution deciding not to introduce officially "any motion about the war for the sake of peace and harmony." (4) The peace party represented by Clifford, Hocking, Hirst Hollowell and A.E. Davies, circulated a petition calling for peace terms which respected the independence of the republics, but they

(1) Ibid, 12th January 1900.

(2) New Age, 5th July 1900.

(3) Dorothea Price Hughes, Op cit, p.573.

(4) War against War, 16th March 1900.

were informed that a counter petition would be drawn up. Clifford who was always among the more cautious section of the peace party, advocated that the anti-war petition be withdrawn, but he was over-ruled and it continued, though signatories had to sign as individual members of various churches and not as members of the Free Church Congress. (1) Nonconformist feeling had been diluted over the Transvaal issue even since 1899. The militancy of a few individual ministers disguised the extent to which there had been a retreat from the pre-war position. There had always been an anti-Boer attitude among Free Churchmen, - the real issue had always been - should federation of the colonies in South Africa be voluntary and peaceful or the result of war.

Individually a high level of activity was maintained in 1900. Of several hundred names of supporters sent to the S.T.W.C. over half were from Nonconformist ministers. In Dundee the Rev. Walter Walsh led the

(1) Ibid.

peace organisation, in Aberdeen Rev. A. Webster helped arrange meetings, - much of the audience of the Schreiner meeting was from his congregation. (1)

Rev. Leach formed a branch of the S.T.W.C. in the Isle of Wight and Hirst Hollowell in Rochdale. Adherents of the S.T.W.C. included the secretaries of the Bible Christian Conference and the Bible Christian New Century Movement, the president of the Leicestershire Christian Endeavour Societies and the secretary of the Lancashire Congregational Lay Preachers Union. (2)

But a number of Nonconformists were pro-war. Rev. H. Horwell, when speaking at Lewisham Congregational Church referred to the war as iniquitous; this was received with cries of "No no" and at the end of the service the organist played Rule Britannia to the acclaim of the congregation. (3) A Congregationalist minister at Burnt Ash near Blackheath, was compelled by his congregation to resign on account of his anti-war opinions; (4) the peace party made a collection for

(1) Cronwright-Schreiner, Op cit., p.351.

(2) New Age, 1st March 1900.

(3) Daily Argus, 19th February 1900.

(4) Bryce MSS. Box on South African War, William Brett to Bryce 13th July 1900.

him. Only one minister of thirty circulated was reported to have joined the Battersea S.T.W.C., - though this may have been on account of its S.D.F. orientation. (1) A friend of John Burns who spoke in a Nottingham chapel against the war met with a hostile reception, - "the chapel steward white with rage, came up to me and, shaking his fist in my face, declared "After this Arthur I shall oppose your ever coming into this pulpit again."" (2) The son of a Congregational minister wrote to Bryce on the subject of a Liberal anti-Government vote in the House of Commons, - "You should have heard my father's indignation and he was an active worker for Liberal causes and candidates seventy years ago and is as keen today as ever for Liberalism and for a speedy success in this just war, and there are multitudes of active Liberals who think the same." (3)

The Society of Friends was most united against the war. At the beginning of January the Meeting for Sufferings decided to rejuvenate the Crimean War Protest which was a general statement of the pacifist position

(1) Cronwright Schreiner Op cit, p.281.

(2) Burns MSS. ADD.MSS. 46,297, Arthur Richardson to Burns.

(3) Bryce MSS. Box on South African War, Howard A. Kennedy to Bryce 6th February 1900.

rather than a specific protest against the South African War. And in February an anti-conscription leaflet was issued. (1) The majority of local groups took some anti-war action. The Rowntrees persuaded Scarborough meeting house to adopt a minute on Christianity and War; (2) and after Rev. F. W. Aveling had addressed the Yorkshire Quarterly meeting an address against war was compiled and sent to all Yorkshire ministers and clergy. (3) Addresses on the Quaker position were drawn up in Lancashire, Cheshire, Warwickshire, Leicester, Stafford, Birmingham, Tunbridge Wells and Brihouse. (4) Forty thousand copies of the Crimean War appeal were distributed and thirty thousand of the anti-conscription circular.

Some meetings were also held - one in Manchester in conjunction with trades unionists and the adult school, one at Yeadon Adult School and two at Bath. (5) The Rowntrees organised the Scarborough peace organisation

(1) Minutes and Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of Friends May 1900, Report of Meeting for Sufferings January 1900.

(2) Wilson MSS. M.D.2506, correspondence between H.J. Wilson and Rowntree.

(3) Friend, 2nd February 1900.

(4) Report of Yearly Meeting May 1900, - report of Peace Committee.

(5) Friend, 23rd February, 23rd March 1900.

and Frederick Sessions of Gloucester ran the S.T.W.C there.

A minority of Friends held that the war was justifiable. This attitude was said to be more prevalent among the younger Quakers, ⁽¹⁾ and it also appeared most strongly in the north east of England. At a Newcastle on Tyne meeting in November 1900 a lecture against the war by Ellen Robinson provoked a good deal of opposition and Joshua Rowntree who was about to depart on a visit to South Africa was denounced as a pro-Boer. ⁽²⁾ J. Wilhelm Rowntree wrote from Yorkshire on the attitude of a Friend who "expressed it as his conviction ..that "the war was needed to show Europe that we had some fight left in us yet": and another official friend maintained in conversation that the Boers deserved a good thrashing." ⁽³⁾ John Bellows a Gloucestershire Quaker published a pamphlet stating that although all war must be condemned, yet as far as possible, Britain was in the right in the Transvaal war. ⁽⁴⁾

(1) Ibid., 16th February 1900.

(2) H.J. Wilson MSS. M.D. 2512, Spence Watson to Wilson 23rd November 1900.

(3) Friend, 26th January 1900.

(4) John Bellows, The truth about the Transvaal War, Gloucester 1900.

However the majority of Friends prevailed on the Yearly Meeting to issue a Quaker appeal "Christianity and War" and to draw up a memorial to the Government hoping for a durable peace based on a magnanimous settlement. ⁽¹⁾

The circulation of this material was placed in the hands of the Peace Committee; they were given financial help by J.E. Ellis M.P. who also suggested useful addresses. ⁽²⁾

The appeal was sent to Nonconformist ministers, local councillors, school boards, M.Ps. Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, Christian Endeavour Societies and the religious press. ⁽³⁾ By the beginning of November 1900 176,000 copies had been distributed, including two thousand for the two Independent Churches at Llandrillo specially translated into Welsh for the occasion. ⁽⁴⁾

The peace movement was thus a mixture of old-fashioned Gladstonian Nonconformists, newer Radicals of

(1) Minutes and Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting, May 1900.

(2) Society of Friends MSS. Minute Book of Peace Committee E 102, 1st February 1900.

(3) Ibid., 8th June 1900.

(4) Ibid., 4th August 1900.

the Lloyd George stamp and Socialists. The Liberal anti-war group were largely relying on second rank leaders, - the veteran Labouchere, Lawson and H.J. Wilson who had never held front bench position. A number of these were Quaker or Nonconformist and predominantly interested, not in advanced reforms but in the old platforms of temperance, or breaking the Church of England control of Education.

One reason for the lack of support for the anti-war party may have been that the more modern collectivist tendencies of the day were monopolised by groups committed to Imperialism, - Chamberlainites, Fabians, tariff reformers, Liberal Imperialists. An alternative collectivism proposed by the Socialist groups, the S.D.F. and I.L.P. - was still not strong enough to attract much support.

Nonconformity especially which was quite strongly represented in the S.T.W.C., had passed the peak of its influence as a political force and was beginning to decline. The mass of the Liberal Party as well was rather behind the times in its priorities.

The moral opposition to Imperialism at the same time had lost much of its appeal. Even the opponents of the Boer War were not necessarily anti-Imperialist but by 1900 accepted a good many of the assumptions of the Imperialist school. Denunciations of the war on moral grounds could no longer command the same sort of enthusiasts as they might have done in 1880; on the other hand an analysis of the war from an economic point of view which was being developed by Hobson and the Socialists, was too complex to be easily understood. The pro-war arguments of Uitlander grievances or Boer conspiracies were more likely to be accepted.

Jingoism in the Boer War.

To a great extent Imperialist feeling during the first year of the Boer War can be described as jingoism in that it was extreme, intolerant of opposition and highly emotional. It centred on patriotic demonstrations and the breaking up of peace meetings, - many of them meetings held by Cronwright-Schreiner during his tour of Britain. There were also celebrations of British victories, - Ladysmith on 2nd March, Mafeking on 18th - 20th May and Pretoria on 5th June. Contemporaries regarded such activities as something quite unique and exceptional, - though they had begun in a small way after the Jameson Raid, and could be seen in the Nelson day rejoicings in October 1898. They were rooted in the build up of militarism in Boys Brigades, Primrose League branches, music hall entertainment and the attitudes of the popular press.

They were also developed by the excitements of the first months of the war, - the departures of troops, the

early victories of the Boers which lent an added spice of excitement. The opinion of Arthur Lyttleton, Conservative M.P. for Leamington Spa that "all men who were patriots and sportsmen must feel that there was about war, once commenced, something of a magnificent game, and young and old felt that they would like to be in South Africa," (1) was no doubt echoed by a large section of the population. From October 1899 to January 1900 between twenty four and twenty eight thousand men a month departed for South Africa. Blunt remarked in March that to volunteer for South Africa "is the smart thing to do just now and all the world is mad for fighting." (2) A key motif was the desire to avenge the defeat of Majuba Hill nineteen years before; "Avenge Majuba" was the cry raised time and again at the railway stations as the troop trains streamed out... When public meetings were held in favour of peace, bills headed "remember Majuba" were distributed broadcast among the people." (3) An article in the Windsor

(1) War against War, 10th November 1899.

(2) W.S. Blunt, Diaries, Vol 1, p.434.

(3) Review of Reviews, November 1899.

Magazine was entitled "Remember Majuba" and included an interview with a veteran of the battle, photographs of graves of British soldiers killed and innumerable comments on Boer duplicity. (1)

The Daily Mail devoted itself almost entirely to aspects of the war. Kipling's war poem "The absent minded beggar" appeared in the Mail on 31st October 1899, and was used in an appeal for a Patriotic Fund to help destitute soldiers' wives, widows etc. Music was composed for the poem "band parts were written and the most famous brass bands in the country entered for the Absent Minded Beggar competition at the Royal Albert Hall.." (2)

Emotional scenes surrounding the departure of troops were described, especially in the case of the City Imperial Volunteers on 14th January. (3)

Events during the first months of the war in the Birmingham suburb of Handsworth were representative of

(1) January 1900.

(2) Kennedy Jones, Fleet St. and Downing St., p.256.

(3) Daily Mail, 15th January 1900.

those in a number of other towns. In November 1899, on the departure of a Council employee who was going to join his regiment in South Africa, the Assistant Surveyor said, "England is burning with patriotism. Insults have been levelled at our country and nothing but a yard of cold steel can mete out the necessary punishment. The country is united, wrongs must be righted and our crown remain unsullied." (1) Such extravagant language was paralleled by a local councillor on the departure of the Volunteers of the South Staffordshire regiment in February, - he was "sure we had never engaged in a more just, necessary or more righteous war (applause)" (2) Concerts and entertainments for various war funds provided opportunities for much patriotic songs and music; for example that given in Handsworth by members of the Corbett family in November 1899, where songs such as "Ordered to the fray" and "a little patch of red" were

(1) Handsworth Herald, 11th November 1899.

(2) Ibid, 17th February 1900.

sung with great gusto. (1)

When Silas Hocking came to speak at a local Congregationalist Church a number of Mason College students interrupted his speech though he did not touch on the war at all. (2) There was a small demonstration on the relief of Ladysmith but at the relief of Mafeking "staid citizens whose severe respectability and decorum are usually beyond reproach were to be seen parading the streets breathlessly hurrahing for all they were worth, shouting patriotic songs with the full force of their lungs, dancing, jumping, screaming in a delirium of unrestrained joy." (3) There was a tremendous display of flags and portraits of Baden Powell and effigies of Kruger were burnt. On the capture of Pretoria a committee including town councillors, the fire brigade, St. Johns Ambulance, Volunteers, the cycle club and the Oddfellows, met in Handsworth to decide on the pattern of a civic

(1) Ibid, 16th November 1899.

(2) Daily Argus, 7th March 1900.

(3) Handsworth Herald, 26th May 1900.

demonstration. This took the form of a torchlight procession, headed by the district steam roller, which included tradesmen's floats and a number of people in fancy dress representing Chamberlain, Kruger and the Absent minded Beggar. The piece de resistance was a genuine wounded soldier carried on a stretcher. (1)

Almost the same activities were duplicated on the same occasions in almost every town in the country. In London on the relief of Ladysmith on 2nd March "the contagion of the moment was upon everyone. Elderly, sober minded merchants came into the thick of it, singing and waving the national colours on the end of their walking sticks and umbrellas." Members of the Stock Exchange, the Corn Exchange and Covent Garden Market joined in the celebrations. (2) The picture of uninhibited behaviour was almost the same as that drawn for Handsworth.

There was a good deal of jingo symbolism expressed in

(1) Ibid, 2nd, 8th June.
Handsworth Mail, 8th June 1900.

(2) Daily Mail, 2nd March 1900.

the sale of patriotic medals and jewellery. A Birmingham firm sold medals depicting Lord Roberts and Baden Powell, a medal inscribed with "good luck to the gentlemen in khaki" and a caricature button of Kruger shown begging for alms at a street corner. ⁽¹⁾ One patron of the firm was reputed to ^{possess} thirty-six different war buttons. Sale of similar medals was advertised in the newspaper of the small Sussex town of Midhurst. ⁽²⁾ The Daily Mail advertised the "Patriotic handkerchief", "silk khaki mufflers as worn by the Imperial Yeomanry" and the "Pretoria bow...leads the fashion in patriotic neckware, silken khaki, union jack centres." ⁽³⁾ There was also a craze for military jewellery, - brooches in the shape of swords and rifles, cuff links representing shrapnel shell, and a sale in imperial cruet sets and flower pots. ⁽⁴⁾ A London firm produced a patriotic souvenir postcard with the dates of Majuba

(1) Daily Argus, 7th June 1900.

(2) Midhurst Times, January to June 1900.

(3) Daily Mail, 9th March 1900.

(4) Daily Argus, 16th June 1900.

and Ladysmith and the wording "wiping something off the slate." (1) This sort of symbolism appeared in the posters and placards attacking pro-Boers and Liberal M.Ps. at the 1900 election.

Conservative Clubs and habitations of the Primrose League did their best to promote patriotic feelings. A member of the Primrose League in Lincolnshire said - "public teas and concerts judiciously combined with a short political speech on Imperialism are exactly what the countryside dweller requires." (2) This recipe was faithfully followed. Imperial South African Association speakers were in demand at League meetings; the League had its own series of Imperial lantern slides. Habitations were urged to keep their members informed of events in South Africa and concerts of course involved singing patriotic songs, and in one case - at Newcastle on Tyne, - a tableau featuring Britannia surrounded by soldiers and sailors. (3) Perth habitation decided to hold an

(1) Gloucestershire Chronicle, 10th March 1900.

(2) Primrose League Gazette, December 1899.

(3) Ibid, January 1900.

"Imperial evening" once a week, when a different part of the Empire would be discussed, letters read from relatives in the dominions and talks given by people who had lived in a portion of the Empire. (1)

Conservative clubs had a number of lectures on the war accompanied by slides showing battles; a particularly bizarre entertainment was advertised on "Explosives and explosions" and "X rays in war", with experiments enabling members of the audience to see their own bones. (2) This type of lantern slide show even percolated the Nonconformist churches; at a London church slides included "photos of armed trains, guns, lyddite shells...most with a good deal of applause but when the photo of our hero-God Lord Roberts was shown the applause grew frantic." A member who asked if a picture of Christ could be shown was ordered to leave. (3)

A Church of England clergyman at Bristol proposing a

(1) Ibid, April 1900.

(2) Conservative Clubs Gazette, February 1900.

(3) Alfred Marks, The Churches and the South African War, p.28

memorial said "It would take ..the form of a crucified Christ surrounded by..the union jack, while at the foot in the place of the familiar figures of St. John and Mary would be those of St. Stephen and St. George, a soldier and a blue jacket." (1) Other clergymen exhibited the union jack in their churches and on the altar.

The Conservative Clubs enthusiastically celebrated Ladysmith - at Poplar Constitutional Club a smoking concert was held, British generals were toasted and the vice-chairman declared "The country would not be satisfied until they saw the British flag floating over Pretoria." (2)

Songs sung by jingo crowds were the same as those in vogue at the music halls. An editorial in the Music Hall and Theatre Review justified the preoccupation with war songs on the grounds that music halls existed to capture the prevailing mood of the moment. (3) Popular

(1) Ibid., p.18.

(2) East End News, 6th March 1900.

(3) 4th May 1900.

songs sung in all music halls included "Soldiers of the Queen" "Another little patch of red", "Marching to Pretoria", "Sons of the Empire" and "Our flag". The words summed up a number of the ingredients of aggressive Imperialism, - feelings of racial superiority, unreasoning dislike of foreigners, reliance on force and belief in expansion almost for its own sake; as in the words of one song which ran "Then fearless we can face the shock, and boast our pride of birth, and tell the envious foreign stock, our Empire is the earth." (1) And another - "Then take the muzzle off, and let him have a go. Is Boer or Briton going to rule, that's what we want to know. Whisper to him Majuba Hill, then at his leash he'll pull, there's only room for one out there, and that's John Bull." (2)

Poems such as "Wait a week or two" written while the seige of Mafeking was still in progress gained an enthusiastic reception. In June at the Tivoli a poem

(1) quoted in War against War, 3rd November 1899.

(2) quoted in Arbitrator, October 1899.

entitled "Some thing to remember" was delivered "with such stirring expression that the audience rose and sang the National Anthem." (1) New war songs and poems were frequently advertised. Another attraction was magic lantern war pictures and tableaux showing British generals, soldiers and sailors. (2) At the Empire Palace in Birmingham a military spectacle was shown called "The Transvaal or Briton and Boer"; all the local regiments were represented and loudly cheered on their appearance. (3)

The music halls surpassed themselves on Mafeking night when they were a focal point of the London celebrations, the Music hall and Theatre Review proclaiming, "if the wild shout of joy at the success of British arms that rent the air of London on Saturday night, be jingoism, why then we ardent apologists of the variety stage are jingoes and proud of it." (4) At the

(1) Music hall and Theatre Review, 1st June 1900.

(2) Ibid, 26th January 1900.

(3) Midland Counties Herald and General Advertiser, 1st February 1900.

(4) 25th May 1900.

Alhambra, Baden Powell's mother attended the performance and when a portrait of the hero appeared on the screen "the scene was indescribable, the audience rising and singing God save the Queen and Rule Britannia." (1)

Jingoism appeared strongly in an especially stereotyped anti-Boer view which was commonly put over. This emerges in a Henty novel of the period; the leading character who goes to South Africa to make his fortune on sharing a railway carriage with some Dutch people remarks, "I can only catch a few words here and there, but I am sure they are running us down. I don't mean us but the English in general." (2) And later "They dream of one great Republic and of their own flag waving everywhere..Since that Majuba business and the fatal surrender afterwards, they despise us altogether." (3) A correspondent of Bryce expressed almost the same convictions, - Gladstone "humiliated us in the eyes of

(1) Music hall and Theatre Review, 25th May 1900.

(2) G.A. Henty, With Roberts to Pretoria, London 1902, p.32.

(3) Ibid, p.41.

the Boers down to the ground; he was sponge cake itself.
They never appreciated it. They have not that nice
 feeling that we understand. I never met a Boer during
 my ten years residence that did not despise us and they
 have been spoiling for a rupture ever since the Gold
was found." (1)

Fervently Imperialist sentiments were expressed in
 letters written to Chamberlain at the time of the House
 of Commons furore in Autumn 1900 over the investments
 made by members of the Chamberlain family in armaments
 firms. (2) Seventy three letters of sympathy poured
 in ~~the~~ Chamberlain in the two days in December following
 the Commons debate. They were, judging from the stamped
 letter headings and type of notepaper, mainly from the
 well-to-do; one fifth were from Church of England
 clergymen. In the longer letters typical statements
 were - "The British Empire is the only real civilizing
 force on the earth. If it were broken the whole vast

(1) Bryce MSS. Box on South African War, Edwin Stevens to
 Bryce, 30th March 1900.

(2) JC 12/2/2/3-75. See JC 12/2/2/2, for the background to
 the scandal.

world would be given to anarchy." (1) And a Kent correspondent, "I am one of hundreds of thousands who admire and respect you for the work you have done in helping to build up and consolidate this great Empire of ours and especially in saving South Africa from becoming a Dutch Republic and in drawing the colonies closer to the Mother Country." (2) The South African conflict was thus not seen purely in its own context but as an element of the wider Imperial mission. This line of thought was echoed in a Daily Mail editorial on the relief of Ladysmith, "As victory comes in after victory we feel and know that the Power that rules this world is not against us and our Empire, that we as a race have been weighed in the balance and not found wanting, and that all the high ideals dear to us and represented in that Empire will not give way to lower and baser civilizations. The cause of freedom has triumphed once more." (3) Imperialists were aware that

(1) JC 12/2/2/3, John England of Birmingham and Belfast.

(2) JC 12/2/7/28, S.H. Chevallier.

(3) 2nd March 1900.

South Africa was very much of a test case, determining the future of the whole Empire and the validity of the Imperialist ideology which had been built up. This made defeat or criticism at home all the more unbearable. Hence the ferocious abuse in the letters sent to members of the peace party. Two letters to Courtney read, - "Your name in years to come will enjoy such a reputation and rouse such sickening memories as to be a curse to those who have the misfortune to bear it." And "it would be a good job for Old England if you and Stead were hung up to a street lamppost." (1) And a sample reply to the S.D.F. manifesto from Tunbridge Wells read "Am much obliged for circular which I shall have the pleasure of consigning to the waste paper basket, afterwards to be used for lighting my fire..it will save me burning my Daily Telegraph...Are you in communication with Leyds? Our enemies are not the Dutch farmers of South Africa but the S.D.F. and similar institutions." (2) It was reported

(1) Courtney MSS. Anonymous letters sent March 1900.

(2) Justice, 10th March 1900.

that "The morning trains and trams in Lancashire were full of men who expressed their attitude by crumpling that paper (the Manchester Guardian) into a ball and throwing it away ostentatiously when they had read the telegrams from New York, Galveston and New Orleans," (1)

Peace advocates were often assumed to be in treasonable correspondence with the Boers. This was especially true of Clark, Ellis and Labouchere whose letter to members of the Transvaal Government and residents in the Transvaal, written before war broke out, were discovered in Pretoria in June 1900. Reginald Statham, a speaker at a peace meeting who had lived for some years in South Africa, was seriously suspected of being a Boer agent; he was watched by the police who sent a special report to the Colonial Office. (2)

Contemporary writers attempted to explain the rise of jingoism since the 1870's. The International Arbitration League related it to the disintegration of

(1) F. Whyte, Life of W.T. Stead, p.171, Vol 2.

(2) C.O. 417/212, Miscellaneous correspondence on South Africa, January to June 1900.

anti-Imperialism in the Liberal Party, the increase of militarism and "if to these agencies is added the fact that all over the country the craze for sport, betting and gambling has almost destroyed the healthy political life of the nation, the rapid growth of jingoism will be easily understood." (1) An important single factor was the Imperialist press propaganda. This was also singled out by J.A. Hobson in an attempt to trace the roots of jingoism, (2) and by Paul Nantoux. (3) Hobson related the unanimity of press opinion on South Africa to its contacts with the correspondents of the Cape press who in turn were supplied with information by the oligarchy of mine owners. (4) The London and local press often carried scarcely veiled incitements to attack meetings. Psychologically the jingo was held to be motivated by

(1) Arbitrator, April 1900.

(2) The psychology of jingoism, London 1901.

(3) A travers L'Angleterre contemporaine, Paris 1900.

(4) J.A. Hobson, Op cit, p.108 et seq.

the desire for revenge and power "The right of the strongest convinces him" (1) Arrogance and the inability to perceive other points of view were also keynotes. Logic played little part, - the Boers could be described almost in the same breath as a small weak people who were daring to attack the might of the British Empire, and as a wily, unscrupulous foe who required tremendous strength to overcome. The background of a jingo was summarised as follows, - "He reads the Yellow papers; he gives ovations in his undergraduate days to those of whom he only knows that they have helped to paint the globe red. He knocks about among people whose two ideals are commerce and the Empire. He helps to give the troops an enthusiastic send-off, and feels somehow a martial glory in himself. He reads the excellent short stories about the dominant race, given in profusion to the English speaking public by an acknowledged master of his craft. He burns with patriotic ardour to have Majuba Hill wiped out; he really believes that such ardour is patriotism...It does not occur

(1) Westminster Review, October 1900, Frances Heath Freshfield, "The development of the jingo", pp.392-7.

to him on Trafalgar Day that there are people who might reasonably like to wipe out Trafalgar." (1)

Jingoism was most dramatically expressed in frequent disruptions of peace meetings, which had begun in 1899 and continued in 1900. A more aggressive manifestation were often unprovoked attacks on individuals suspected of being pro-Boers. The relief of Ladysmith on 2nd March sparked off an exceptionally violent series of disturbances which lasted for the rest of the month, and then tailed off.

Apart from riots connected with Cronwright-Schreiner's speaking tour, two thirds of the disturbances took place in towns where there was no peace organisation at all. Schreiner's tour coincided with the worst of the demonstrations. He was invited to England by J.A. Hobson with whom he stayed for a good deal of his visit. He was an especially well-informed peace advocate as a former resident in the Transvaal, a Cape politician and husband of Olive Schreiner the writer. His meetings

(1) Ibid, see also Contemporary Review, 1900 pp.774-89, Robert Buchanan "The voice of the hooligan".

were organised by the S.T.W.C. and the Conciliation Committee who contributed some of the costs of his visit. He arrived at the end of January and spoke at a Positivist meeting, a meeting of working men at Mansfield House Settlement and a meeting at Hastings, all of which were peaceful and had large anti-war majorities. (1) Up to 2nd March he encountered no serious opposition except at Leicester where in spite of Lib-Lab co-operation to hold the meeting it was broken up. (2) There was no particular jingo impetus till after the Ladysmith celebrations. Schreiner's presence may not have been widely known in the first month of his tour.

Schreiner's first tour lasted from 19th February to 19th March and included seventeen meetings outside London, ten of which had to be abandoned. All meetings after 7th March in fact were abandoned. Successful meetings were held at Hastings, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, Bradford, Pudsey near Leeds and

(1) Cronwright-Schreiner, Op cit, p.15, p.18.

(2) Ibid, p.37, War against War, 16th February 1900.

Glasgow, though the last two were very stormy. There were serious jingo disturbances at Leicester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Gateshead, Sheffield and Scarborough. At York, Liverpool, Leeds and Burnley the promoters of the meetings forestalled jingoism by publicising the abandonment of the meetings.

In all the cases of jingoism there was an element of prior organisation; this often emerged as Conservative planning. For instance at Leicester some tickets had been forged and used by jingoes and the chairman was not slow to accuse the Conservative Party of this. ⁽¹⁾ The publicans and drink interest, in most cases synonymous with Conservatism, were frequently mentioned as associated with jingoism, - this was partly a reflection of the fact that the crowds were often said to be drunk.

At Glasgow on 6th March, Schreiner stated that the local Conservatives had received wires from London instructing them to foment a disturbance and they then distributed free drinks and bought up corner boys for

(1) Leicester Daily Post, 21st February 1900.

one to two shillings a head to take part in the demonstration, ⁽¹⁾ reminiscent of the accusations following the Trafalgar Square jingoism. He added "It is curious how closely associated are Imperialism and the liquor question," - the association was likely to be a reflection of the natural alliance between Conservatives and publicans against Liberals and temperance reformers.

At Gateshead there was strong proof that local councillors organised the demonstration outside Spence Watson's house, where Schreiner was staying. Schreiner wrote that councillors and magistrates sent round handbills inciting a demonstration, which bore the imprint of the Conservative publications, - "Behind this there can be no doubt that there were paid political agents." ⁽²⁾ Speakers at the impromptu patriotic meeting included a local architect and doctor, and some impetus seems to have been given by reports of the rioting

(1) Cronwright-Schreiner, Op cit, p.64.

(2) Ibid, pp.145-6.

at Edinburgh and Dundee which had been described in the local press. (1) The local Conservative papers had publicised the proposed meeting and suggested that pro-Government supporters should attend. The Gateshead S.T.W.C. felt "we have ample evidence that in the case of the Gateshead disturbances there was very definite organisation; literature of an inflammatory nature was widely distributed; plans were laid for a concerted attack on the hall in which the meeting was to be held." (2)

The Sheffield newspapers played an important part in the disruption of arrangements for the Schreiner meeting organised by H.J. Wilson. The day before the meeting was due to be held a copy of the privately circulated invitation sent to one hundred people, found its way to the office of the Sheffield and Rotherham Independent; the paper asserted that it had been sent to a member of the staff, - possibly to the pro-war Liberal who had opposed Wilson in 1899. The same day the

(1) Gateshead Guardian, 17th March 1900.

(2) Ibid, 24th March 1900.

Sheffield evening paper the Star, published a copy of the invitation, pointing out for the benefit of those who had not been invited that there were three entrances to the hall which might be stormed. (1) The following day the Sheffield Telegraph remarked "why should they keep these good things to themselves ? We are certain that the people of Sheffield would like to take part in this meeting." (2) The promoters assumed that this publication would result in the meeting being broken up, and it was called off. In spite of this a crowd still gathered for a patriotic meeting. (3)

On most occasions the police were considered to have inadequately protected the peace party. Schreiner thought that this was the case in Glasgow and Edinburgh where there were only thirty police to deal with a crowd of many thousands. In Edinburgh the City Council refused to discuss the rioting at all and did not request a report from the police till the end of April. (4)

(1) H.J. Wilson MSS. M.D.2517, notes on the Schreiner meeting, - cutting from Independent, and Star.

(2) Ibid, cutting from Telegraph.

(3) Ibid, cutting from Independent.

(4) Labour Leader, 28th April 1900.

This was in spite of the fact that the rioting here was particularly serious and Schreiner only escaped injury by being rescued by two stewards.

It was in Scarborough that the association of the Conservatives on the Town Council with the riots was seen most clearly. The disturbance took place on 12th March the evening before the proposed meeting, on the occasion of a reception for Schreiner at the Rowntrees' cafe. When the cafe was attacked, the Chief Constable and the chairman of the Watch Committee urged the company to disperse. The latter according to a Quaker who was present said "I have told our people (meaning his supporters at the Constitutional Club) to content themselves with singing patriotic songs..." (1) He admitted the organisation of a demonstration which appeared to have got out of hand. The houses and business premises of the Rowntrees, who were responsible for most of the Scarborough peace arrangements, were attacked and damaged, and at least two individual members

(1) War against War, 16th March 1900.

of the peace party were attacked on their way home. (1)

During the riots both the chairman of the Watch Committee and the Deputy Mayor declined to read the riot act, and the troops who finally dispersed the crowd were not called out till after eleven o'clock when the disturbances had already raged for some hours. (2)

A letter to the local paper a few days later declared "it has been common talk all over the town that some of the members of the Town Council were leaders in the riot." (3)

A number of local Unionists were seen to incite the crowd, (4) councillors were heard expressing approval of the riots, and well dressed men in the crowd were heard to incite youths to break William Smith's windows. (5)

There were affidavits made by two people that Town Councillors had offered them money to begin breaking Rowntrees' windows. (6) For some time the Conservative members of the Watch Committee refused to lay the evidence

(1) Scarborough Evening News, 13th March 1900.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., 26th March 1900.

(4) Ibid., 17th March 1900.

(5) Ibid., 13th March 1900.

(6) Cronwright Schreiner, Op cit., p.206.

of the Chief Constable before the public prosecutor. At the beginning of April, probably due to the pressure of the publicity the riots had received, they rescinded their decision, but the eventual prosecution of twenty four rioters was disappointing since only one, a sea captain, could be described as a "respectable resident", and none of the organisers were included; the defendants were overwhelmingly working class comprising two barmen, three sea captains, two telegraph messengers, three labourers, two newsvendors, a printer, a bricklayer, a laundreyman and a members of the armed forces; the rest had no employment mentioned. (1) Seven were convicted of throwing stones and received small fines. Those whose cases were dismissed were cheered by the audience in the court. (2)

It was significant that the riot seemed to be aimed as much at the Rowntree family, and at the dominant position they had gained in the town, as at the peace meeting. Although there were thirty five people at the

(1) Scarborough Evening News, 26th April 1900.

(2) Ibid.

Schreiner reception that attack was mainly directed at the Rowntrees; one letter to the local paper expressed the view that the incident was largely an attempt to pay off old political scores. ⁽¹⁾ Another letter writer had succeeded in pinpointing the general hostility towards this Quaker family on account of their business success and moral probity. ⁽²⁾ Joshua Rowntree emphasised the dislike of the Quaker view on the drink question in a letter to H.J. Wilson, - "I think the violence here was due to the drink trade using the war fever against us. The venom came from alcohol. The Chief Constable is decent but not equal to a riot, - he has one of the chief leaders of the trade influence (though not a publican) as chairman of the Watch Committee." ⁽³⁾

It was obvious that the working class was heavily represented in the riots, - though not as ringleaders. In Leicester however, Schreiner described

(1) Ibid, 17th March 1900.

(2) Ibid, 26th March 1900.

(3) H.J. Wilson MSS. M.D. 2525, Joshua Rowntree to Wilson 21st March 1900.

the crowd as well to do young men, with the "better type of working man" largely absent. (1) In Scotland students played an important role; at Glasgow the working men in the audience were said to be quiet and the mob came from a higher stratum of society. (2) The Edinburgh crowd was mainly composed of students and at Dundee of students and clerks. (3) Of course accounts of crowd composition were often impressionistic, - the Socialist press was reluctant to admit that working men took part in anti-peace demonstrations at all and liked to think that all jingoes were in the words of Labour Leader "well dressed roughs hired for the occasions." (4) But the Scottish crowds at any rate seem to have had a high preponderance of medical and other students, while working men were more associated with the defence of the meeting.

(1) Cronwright Schreiner, Op cit, p.37.

(2) Ibid, p.66.

(3) Labour Leader, 17th March 1900.

(4) Ibid.

But the Sheffield crowd on the admission of the peace party consisted largely of "respectably dressed working men, with a admixture of those who would consider themselves as belonging to a higher station, and a large proportion of loafers." (1)

The demonstrations all followed an almost identical pattern of processions and outdoor meetings, singing of a few regulation patriotic songs, window breaking and attacks on particular individuals said to be associated with the peace movement. Schreiner commented on the violence "Talk of Johannesburg ! It is a quiet country village compared with the big towns of Great Britain just now." (2)

When Schreiner arrived back in London his speaking engagements were conducted at small unpublicised meeting in private houses, - at the Hobhouses on 21st March, Dr. Bridges on 6th April and Ramsay MacDonalds on 10th May; two private meetings were held at Hornsey and Croyden. There were two social events in his honour

(1) War against War, 16th March 1900.

(2) H.J. Wilson MSS. M.D. 2519, Schreiner to Wilson 10th March 1900.

- a breakfast at the Westminster Palace Hotel given by J.E. Ellis, and a dinner at the Cafe Monico by the New Reform Club. The hostility towards the peace party was such that the owners of both establishments later wrote to the press declaring that they would not have permitted the entertainments to have taken place if they had known they were for Schreiner. (1)

The jingoist myths had extended throughout society, - after the dinner when the guests were departing, one porter was heard to remark, - "Kruger's secret service money running to cabs eh?" (2) Schreiner possibly because of his name, was frequently accused of being a Boer, though he was in fact of English descent, and there was a further amusing confusion of nationalities at Scarborough where a washer woman said that she was sorry for the Rowntrees "but what can they expect for harbouring an Afghan." (3)

On 21st April Schreiner secretly visited

(1) Cronwright Schreiner, Op cit, p.242.

(2) Ibid.

(3) H.J. Wilson M.S. M.D. 2519, extract from magazine Black and White.

Penistone at the invitation of H.J. Wilson, to speak to the Liberal Association. All precautions were taken to ensure that no word of the meeting leaked out, and even members of the Liberal party did not know beforehand that Schreiner was going to be present. (1)

In May a second tour was arranged which was to take in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Huddersfield, Rochdale, Leicester, Sheffield and Leeds, but at the start it coincided with the Mafeking celebrations and was abandoned after a particularly stormy meeting at Aberdeen when a mob of students and engineers thirty thousand strong, had to be dispersed by the military. (2) Schreiner attended a few small meetings in London and returned to South Africa on 7th July.

In addition to the jingoism directed against Schreiner, there were at least thirty-three other incidents outside London in the first six months of 1900. Fairly comprehensive lists of jingo attacks appeared in War against War and Review of Reviews. (3) Most of the

(1) M.D. 2506, diary of events 1899-1902.

(2) Cronwright Schreiner, Op cit, p.331 et seq.

(3) April 1900.

incidents took place in March and eight coincided with the relief of Ladysmith and its attendant celebrations on 2nd March. Relief of the tension and anxiety concerning the fate of British forces in South Africa, was the signal for patriots to savagely attack the peace advocates; victory celebrations merged with attacks on "pro-Boers". But in over half the cases of jingoism attacks took place with little provocation since there was no peace organisation in the towns concerned, and these included the most serious cases. In other cases riots occurred on rumours of peace meetings which were broken up or called off; this happened in West Bromwich, Thornbury, Gloucester, Derby, Yarmouth, Reading, Barnsley, Rochdale and Ripon. At Worksop the peace meeting rumour turned out to be a false alarm and a temperance meeting was disrupted instead and a local Wesleyan schoolmaster followed home and pelted with eggs, stones and earth. (1) Often the victims denied taking any part in anti-war activity or even holding anti-war

(1) War against War, 30th March 1900.

Hansard, 4th series, Vol 81, col.445-6. Question by Lawson on Worksop disturbances.

opinions. For instance at Peterhead a headmaster of a local school had his windows broken for allegedly refusing his pupils a half day holiday at the relief of Ladysmith, - he denied this. ⁽¹⁾ A Brierley Hill a preacher was attacked on the slight pretext that he had expressed a wish that all English troops in South Africa would be killed, - he denied saying this. ⁽²⁾ This was a common accusation and at Stratford-on-Avon was used in conjunction with the claim that the victims had displayed a Transvaal flag, - the truth of this was never proved. Similarly the only concrete evidence of pro-Boer sentiments in Midhurst was the possession of a French cartoon showing the Queen kneeling to Kruger. A Margate the owner of a temperance restaurant was attacked and was afraid to re-enter the town for town for two days, - on the grounds that he had displayed a portrait of the Queen upside down, and had hung out a Boer flag. ⁽³⁾ The vicar at Kingston St. Michael near Chippenham was accused of not ringing the church

(1) Morning Leader, 6th March 1900.

(2) Ibid, 9th March 1900.

(3) Thanet Guardian and Margate and Ramsgate Recorder, 17th March 1900.

Hansard, Op cit, Col.691. Question by Maddison on Margate rioting.

bells to celebrate Ladysmith, and this was held to be equivalent to pro-Boerism. (1)

There was thus often very slight evidence of pro-Boerism; also the accusations were very stereotyped, - it was often claimed that particularly inflammatory opinions had been expressed, - that all British troops would be defeated or killed for instance, or display of flags or pro-Boer symbols. In many cases they were too exaggerated to be true in view of the caution of most stop the war advocates at this time. Personal quarrels, local issues and political differences probably played as much part as a genuine feeling that pro-Boers really existed. In Midhurst none of the victims belonged to peace organisations and they wrote to the local paper pointing out the contributions they had made to the war fund. (2) At Ryde in the Isle of Wight victims issued placards offering rewards to anyone giving information as to the origins of the slander that they were pro-Boers. (3)

(1) War against War, 16th March 1900.

(2) Midhurst Times, 9th March 1900.

(3) War against War, 6th April 1900.

The House of Commons debate on the rioting on 15th March, emphasised these points. The matter was raised on the motion of adjournment by R.T. Reid who said that the disturbances were not confined to the places where meetings were being held, that a large number of people attacked disclaimed all sympathy with the Boers, the mobs were usually drunk and many disturbances organised. (1) The Liberal speakers referred especially to the part played by newspapers in inciting riots by publishing details of meetings or letters from jingoes. The Government was not sympathetic to the victims of riots, - the Home Secretary inferred that the victims not the jingoes were responsible for the trouble. (2) This reflected the general Conservative opinion which drew a very fine line between breaking up meetings and physically attacking individuals, - "The people of England have not the right to smash the windows or break the heads of those piffling treason mongers, but they have the right

(1) Hansard, Vol 80, col.940 et seq.

(2) Ibid, Vol 81, col.691.

to refuse to hear them and to turn their meetings into loyal demonstrations." (1) Jingoism was condoned by most Conservatives.

Two of the most serious incidents at Midhurst and Stratford, show that the organisations and composition of the riots was rather more complicated than generalised contemporary explanations imply. These both took place at the time of the Ladysmith celebrations and both took place in quite small towns, where there was no peace organisation and even Liberalism was weak. The Stratford demonstration could be traced decisively to the Conservative Club, while that at Midhurst appeared to be more spontaneous with the initiative taken by an ostler. The other Midhurst rioters who were brought to trial included two carteres, two labourers, a decorator, a plumber, a painter, a porter, a clerk and a smith. (2) All came from Midhurst or from surrounding villages and all were working class with the exception of a painter and decorator who had a shop in the high street

(1) Conservative Clubs Gazette, April 1900.

(2) Midhurst Times, 23rd March 1900.

and ran a weekly advertisement in the Midhurst Times.

The campaign against the "pro-Boers" began with a letter to the paper, followed by the setting up of a placard in the market square; some care had been taken to inscribe this with satirical variations on the names of the victims and their professions, and a demonstration was advertised for the same night. ⁽¹⁾ This took the form of a procession of between three and four hundred people who broke windows and damaged property and it was repeated on the two succeeding nights. The victims were all Midhurst tradesmen of a rather higher social class than the crowd, - a tailor, a hairdresser and the owner of a newspaper shop. It was claimed that they were all Liberals, ⁽²⁾ though their only offence appeared to have been expression of some "thoughtless opinions on the war." ⁽³⁾ The only peace activity in Midhurst had been the collection of a few signatures for Stead's Memorial against the war, at the end of 1899, but none of the victims of jingoism had been listed as

(1) Ibid. 9th March 1900.

(2) Star, 9th March 1900.

(3) Midhurst Times, 9th March 1900.

collectors of signatures.

The demonstration was thus organised and may have had personal or political motives. The police seemed to have action satisfactorily in dispersing the crowd on the second and third nights and a police prosecution was brought at the Petty Sessions, though the defendants were merely bound over to keep the peace. The occasion of the disturbance was more the desire to celebrate Ladysmith in an exciting manner than any provocation offered by the victims.

At Stratford there was likewise disorder on three consecutive nights, - 2nd, 3rd and 4th March, taking the form of processions which attacked the premises of a Mr. Buller and auctioneer. (1) On the second and third nights detachments of police prevented much damage. According to the Stratford on Avon Herald it was common knowledge that the rioters had been incited by members of the Union Club where a smoking concert to celebrate

(1) Stratford upon Avon Herald, 9th March 1900.

I am indebted to Mr. E.P. Thompson for the useful suggestion that the three nights in a row attack on unpopular persons may derive from an old country folk custom; this would explain the three nights attacks in the country districts of Midhurst and Stratford and the single attacks in the larger towns.

Ladysmith took place on 2nd March. ⁽¹⁾ Edward Fox a leading member of the Club was said to have given the signal for the attack; the Conservative Club which was also a working men's club, raised a subscription to help the defendants who were arrested after the riot. ⁽²⁾ The only person finally committed to the Quarter Sessions was a clerk who admitted having been in the Conservative Club previous to the demonstration; a labourer was also brought to trial but not convicted. At the trial of the clerk, the jury could not decide whether the assembly had been riotous or not, and the case was dismissed. ⁽³⁾ (There were no Stratford men on the jury). A Birmingham paper claimed that a member of the Conservative Club was in constant communication with the defence solicitor. ⁽⁴⁾ The victims were Liberals. This disturbance could be traced to Conservative organisation.

(1) Ibid, 16th March 1900.

(2) Ibid, 23rd March 1900.

(3) Ibid, 6th April 1900.

(4) Daily Argus, 20th March 1900.

Most riots had some organisation behind them. Placards were published or provocative letters appeared in the press. Sometimes there was a good deal of symbolism, - at Redruth in Cornwall two effigies were made, - one of a local pro-Boer names Glasson and one of Kruger both "lying in an orange box with tarred face and rotten orange wreaths." (1) At Kingston St. Michael an effigy was hung from a tree with the inscription "There are the remains of a pro-Boer." (2)

The riots though sometimes confined to window breaking, were also noted for highly unpleasant personal violence. At Redruth Glasson was seized by the crowd and covered in tar, - he was eventually escorted home by the police. (3) At Pudsey near Bradford a member of the I.L.P. was seriously injured when a meeting was broken up. In January a stock broker was attacked because it was rumoured that he had not offered to keep the jobs of his clerks open while

(1) Cornubian and Redruth Times, 9th March 1900.

(2) Gloucestershire Chronicle, 10th March 1900.

(3) Cornubian and Redruth Times, 9th March 1900.

they were at the front. (1) An old man was pursued by a mob in Hyde Park apparently because he happened to be wearing a tie in the Boer colours. (2) In the same category was an incident at Lambeth where a parish constable had a bag of flour thrown over him for the ostensible reason that he resembled Kruger !" (3) At Chatteris the Urban District Council clerk was followed home by a mob and later censured by the council for the "crime" of distributing Morning Leader leaflets against the war. (4)

London jingoism developed with the March 3rd Exeter Hall meeting; a placard was issued reading "Boers in Exeter Hall, disgraceful speeches !" and the Conservative press had suggested that the meeting might be broken up. It was asserted that the police had supported the jingoes, - a correspondent of the Morning Leader on asking the police about the meeting had received the reply that it was a

(1) Daily Argus, 19th January 1900.

(2) War against War, 6th April 1900.

(3) Star, 1st February 1900.

(4) Morning Leader, 7th March 1900.

Boer meeting and that it was easy to enter by a back entrance in order to disrupt it. ⁽¹⁾ A letter from one of the stewards described the mob as "public house loafers" and those directing them as "Jews". ⁽²⁾ Local politics also played a part in London jingoism. In Edmonton W.J. Wrampling an S.D.F. member and member of the U.D.C. and Board of Guardians, was accused in a hand bill of denigrating British troops in South Africa; later, in May, an S.D.F. meeting was broken up. It was claimed that the jingoes in this case were local jerrybuilders and political opponents of Wrampling. ⁽³⁾ The periodical New Age asserted that some jingoes were jerrybuilders or employers of sweated labour, the other category being publicans incensed by their opponents attitude on the drink question. ⁽⁴⁾

Another example of London jingoism was the attack on an open air peace meeting of Hackney Peace Union in

(1) Morning Leader, 6th March 1900.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Justice, 25th May, 9th June 1900.

(4) 21st June 1900.

Victoria Park on 24th May. Will Crooks and Joseph Clayton the assistant editor of New Age, were attacked and Clayton was accused of assaulting a member of the crowd. (1) A fund was opened for his defence and he was eventually found not guilty.

The climax of the jingoism was the Mafeking celebration which lasted for three nights and two days from 18th to 20th May. The celebrations followed a similar pattern all over the country and even the smallest towns took part. A typical event was a procession, - often a torchlight procession was arranged by the local authorities. But much of the rejoicing was spontaneous, with music halls providing a focus of entertainment with special songs and recitations. Everywhere there were busts of Baden Powell and often effigies of Kruger were burnt. Tableaux represented British generals, the British lion, the Union Jack and other popular symbols.

At Mifhurst all the shops were decorated, even

(1) War against War, 6th July 1900.

those owned by victims of the riots, and local Volunteers, Fire Brigade and Church Lads Brigade took part in a procession. (1) In Birmingham there was a procession of medical students from Mason College, and an organised procession on 20th May. A free magic lantern show was held at the Midland Institute showing pictures of the war and the generals. (2) There was great opportunity for patriotic sentiments, - at Gloucester one councillor said, "England would remain the most glorious and greatest Empire the world has ever seen (cheers) It was the ambition of the British Empire to be the greatest Empire on which the sun ever set." (3)

There were a few attacks on the peace party. John Burns had his windows broken, - he wrote of the London events, - "Streets crowded with madly excited people- Never have I seen such a wild delirium over so small a victory. Crowds paraded up and down the hill and a well organised gang of political opponents whilst passing

(1) Midhurst Times, 25th May 1900.

(2) Daily Argus, 21st May, 6th, 7th June 1900.

(3) Gloucestershire Chronicle, 26th May 1900.

managed to break three of the front windows." (1) But the next day he was able to hold a successful open air peace meeting in Battersea Park. Stead's cottage at Hayling was attacked and Silas Hocking's neighbours windows were broken by mistake. At Wimbledon a torchlight procession having been supplied with drinks at the Conservative Club, broke the windows of the Liberal Club when it refused the same service. (2) There were few incidents outside London, - French residents in Jersey were attacked and there was a disturbance at Dover where a man was accused of the usual pro-Boer acts, - hanging out the Boer flag and a portrait of the Queen upside down. (3)

There were similar celebrations on the entry of British forces into Pretoria on 5th June but much more toned down and shorter in duration than the Mafeking events. The music halls rose to the occasion - at the Alhambra a war map tableau showed the royal standard floating over Pretoria, patriotic songs were sung after which the Union Jack fell to cover the whole of the

(1) John Burns MSS. ADD.MSS.46.318, Diary, 19th May 1900.

(2) War against War, 1st June 1900.

(3) Ibid.

Transvaal. A screen was then lowered on which "Bravo Bobs" and "Floreat Etona" were inscribed; as the reporter put it "the audience then took the entertainment into their own hands." (1)

Jingo incidents after June were more scattered and infrequent than in the previous six months. Only the demonstration against Lloyd George in Birmingham really approached in intensity the earlier ones. Though this took place in December 1901 its content was similar to the March 1900 rioting. Lloyd George came to address a meeting on the invitation of the Liberal Association. His attack on Chamberlain over the investments scandal in 1900 may have provoked some of the disturbance. The crowd made it impossible for the meeting on 18th December to continue although three hundred and fifty constables were present. Fifty thousand people besieged the Town Hall, harangued by a councillor and member of the School Board. (2) One member of the crowd was killed in a police charge and a number of people were injured. Lloyd George only escaped in a policeman's clothes. Ten people

(1) Star, 6th June 1900.

(2) Birmingham Daily Post, 19th December 1901.

appeared in court the following day; their occupations were given as clerk, silversmith, carpenter, basket maker, brass polisher, metal worker, painter and railway workers. They were almost all young, - in the sixteen to twenty age group. (1) These were not necessarily representative of the crowd since younger people might have been more likely to engage in violence and thus to be arrested.

In fact the most badly documented aspect of the riots was their composition. Even when certain rioters were prosecuted they were more likely to be the dupes than the actual organisers. There were many attempts to prove that the real working class were a minority in the crowds. According to New Age the London Mafeking crowd was mainly youthful composed of clerks, stock jobbers, corner boys, loafers, hooligans and female shop assistants, but with few mechanics or trades unionists. (2) Mafeking night to the S.D.F. was notable for drunkenness and "licentious indecency" and for large number of

(1) Ibid. 20th December 1901.

(2) 24th May 1900.

pickpockets, (1) But Blatchford noticed the good humour and tolerance of the crowd and the mixture of classes "a whole people of one mind". (2) It is likely that greater numbers of the working class took part than the peace party liked to believe. A regular subscriber to the Club and Institute Journal wrote "I'm afficked" for all I was worth and am not a bit ashamed of it. And even if everybody did not keep sober I am still of the opinion that the outburst was one highly creditable to our race...I noticed that the radical clubs if anything showed greater exhilaration than any other." (3)

Peace advocates implied that jingoism was confined to the very lowest and most dubious social class, - "drunken vagabonds" and "common roughs of the towns", (4) and picturesquely by Justice as "Rowdies, hooligans, prostitutes, bullies and male prostitutes." (5) There was also a tendency to ascribe jingoism to foreigners.

(1) Justice, 26th May 1900.

(2) Clarion, 26th May 1900.

(3) Club and Institute Journal, June 1900.

(4) Hansard, vol 80, col 940 et seq.

(5) 21st April 1900.

Viz Justice , - "Every Italian ice-cream vendor or restaurant keeper, every German baker, every French costumier, every Jew fishmonger or fruiterer is a rabid jingo." (1) Not only the Imperialists were prejudiced against foreigners.

However it was obvious from the occupations of those rioters brought to trial that some of them were solidly working class. A distinction had to be made between working class jingoes and working class radicals or Socialists who could be relied on to oppose the war.

An analysis of the riots indicates that some were instigated by Conservatives whose anti-Liberal feeling found a semi-legitimate outlet in patriotic display; the anti-war opinions of some Liberals made the whole party a legitimate jingo target. An element of personal dislike was probably also important; a number of the victims were tradesmen or shopkeepers who may have incurred the hostility of trade rivals or customers to whom they had refused credit. Many of the victims may have incurred antagonism on account of their social position , - which in most cases was higher than that of

(1) 21st April 1900.

the attackers. Local authorities, - magistrates and police did not always act effectively to stop the riots, - which again reflects political disagreements. Some of the riots were also either organised or ^{con}ived at by authority.

But the rioting was also an extreme example of intense and almost hysterical Imperialist feeling which had been developing since the 1870's. In this respect they reflected extreme patriotism fanned by the events of the war; excessive anti-Boer feeling; and aggression bubbling over into actual violence, - the violence of the war received at second hand seemed to have stimulated a desire to emulate the troops; the armed forces attacked the Boer, - the British at home the pro-Boers. In the background appearing in speeches and comments was an increasingly assertive Imperialism in which the power and extension of the Empire were taken for granted and shrouded in lofty language. There was no doubt in the minds of the majority of the population by 1900 that not only had the Empire come to stay, but that it was emphatically a very desirable thing.

The peace movement which had suffered a reverse in the jingoism of March 1900, revived to some degree in the Summer. The threatened annexation of the Boer Republics provided a common platform of opposition from opponents of the war. Meetings were held on the subject and a petition was got up. More London peace meetings were held and provincial activity revived. A large Manchester meeting was held on 29th June with Hardie and Emily Hobhouse. ⁽¹⁾ At Liverpool John Brunner chaired a Conciliation Committee meeting of over two thousand people, ⁽²⁾ and there was a later meeting in December to protest at the character of warfare in South Africa. A Rochdale meeting was held and Hardie conducted a series of meetings in Wales, while in Leicester a Society for the promotion of peace was holding regular open air meetings from June onwards.

Now that there was no danger of the British being defeated the anti-war party had more justification. A generous peace settlement was likely to unite more

(1) Labour Leader 7th July 1900.

(2) New Age, 7th June 1900.

Liberals in its pursuance, than a demand that the war be stopped in mid course. The concentration camp issue was also a rallying point in the latter part of 1900 and in 1901. It was possibly partly through the lines of anti-Government activity in the last eighteen months of the war, that the Liberal Party was able to avoid a serious split. Moderates and pro-Boers could unite behind the demand for a fair settlement.

But the anti-war movement had made only a slight impact. It was note worthy that almost half the expenditure of the S.T.W.C. in 1900 consisted of printing and advertising, and another large slice for postage. ⁽¹⁾ The bulk of the work done was by dsitributing literature printing pamphlets and leaflets - three and a half million peices of literature had been distributed altogether. But more positive activity in the form of meetings was largely lacking; and much of the propaganda may have fallen on deaf ears.

(1) Stop the War Committee, Report and Statement of Accounts, 11th January to 31st December 1900.

£2,720 had been contributed altogether and "2,628 spent.

The Liberals and the 1900 Election.

The Liberals did not fare as catastrophically in the General Election of October 1900 as they may have feared. They made a net loss of only two seats. After the Election Conservatives and Liberal Unionists together held four hundred and one seats, Liberals and Labour one hundred and eighty seven and Irish Nationalists eighty two. (1) The Conservatives gained thirty five seats and the Liberals thirty-three (excluding Ireland where two Nationalist gains balanced two Unionist ones). (2) The two parts of the country where the Liberals lost most heavily were Scotland and the north-east (Northumberland and Durham). The Conservatives made a net gain of six seats in Scotland where the Liberals were traditionally strong, and of four seats in the north-east. (3) The Liberal leaders especially bemoaned the disaster in Scotland but in proportion to the number of constituencies

(1) Times, 19th October 1900.

(2) See Appendix 2.

(3) See Appendix 2.

(seventy-two in Scotland and twenty-five in the north-east), the loss in Northumberland and Durham was greater.

In Scotland two Glasgow seats were lost, one Edinburgh seat, Sutherland and Wick in the Highlands, East Aberdeenshire and Dumfriesshire. The Liberals gained Invernesshire. In the north-east it was mainly the urban constituencies which fell to the Conservatives, - Middlesborough, Sunderland, Stockton on Tees, the county constituency of Tyneside (which was largely urban) and South-east Durham. None of the mining constituencies were captured by Conservatives. The Liberals gained Hartlepool.

The Liberals did especially well in Wales gaining four seats, - while the Unionists gained Monmouth District. Of the thirty Welsh seats the Liberals now held twenty six (including Keir Hardie who won one of the Merthyr seats, displacing a Liberal).

Over the rest of England the Conservative and Liberal gains largely balanced out. In London the Conservatives gained three seats all with a predominantly

working class electorate; but issues other than the war were possibly important, - the alien immigration agitation in Stepney and S.W. Bethnal Green, and the hostility of the costermongers in Shoreditch Hoxton to the regulations imposed by the L.C.C. (1) The Liberals gained N. Camberwell and Shoreditch Haggerston - won by W. Cremer the peace advocate. The Liberal position in London which was extremely precarious with only eight seats, was at least not much worsened.

In Lancashire there were four Conservative gains, Burnley, Southport, Oldham and Middleton, and two Liberal gains, - Lancaster and Radcliffe. The Liberal decline in Lancashire was thus continued. In Yorkshire two Liberal gains cancelled out two Conservative gains. In the South-west the Conservatives gained two seats and Liberals three, in Cumberland and Westmoreland the Conservatives gained two and the Liberals one.

The maintenance of the Liberal position of course masked a general reduction in majorities though over two million voters voted Liberal or Nationalist against

(1) Henry Pelling, Op cit, p.46 et seq.

nearly two and a half million Unionist voters. (1)

The tragedy of the Liberals was not that they made large losses, but that they did not make expected gains. The usual swing of the pendulum did not take place, and the Conservatives were returned for an unprecedented further term of power. To contemporaries used to the regular alternation of the parties since the widening of the electorate in 1885, the balance of power seemed to lie permanently with the Conservatives.

A strong anti-war position was no certain guarantee of losing one's seat in 1900. Of the thirty four hard core anti-war M.Ps. who voted for two anti-war amendments 1899-1900, only ten lost their seats, though Clark had been forced out by the local Liberals and T. R. Leuty (E. Leeds) resigned before the election. Two thirds of anti-war M.Ps. retained their seats. Of the ten unlucky anti-war Liberals, three were Scottish M.Ps. - T.R. Buchannan (Aberdeenshire) J. McLeod (Sutherland) and R. Souttar (Dunfriesshire). Two were London M.Ps. - Steadman and Pickersgill, and the others were Lawson,

(1) The actual figures were, - Unionists - 2,428,492,
Liberals & Nats. 2,105,518.

Stanhope, Maddison, J. Duckworth (Middleton Lancs) and J. Samuel (Stockton-on-Tees). M.Ps. who were only mildly anti-war, - ie. who had voted for Stanhope's moderate amendment but not for more extreme attacks on the Government, and who had played little part in the anti-war movement, stood almost as good a chance of losing their seats. Eight of the Conservative gains were in constituencies where moderately anti-war Liberals sat. ⁽¹⁾ Sixteen Conservative gains, - over half the total were made in constituencies where the Liberal M.Ps. were not noticeably anti-war, had either supported the Government or remained neutral. ⁽²⁾

The anti-war M.Ps. were rather more likely than the others to meet defeat but not to the extent that might be expected; a good deal depended on the individual constituency. Labouchere, Ellis, H.J. Wilson, Lloyd

(1) In S.E. Durham (Liberal M.P. J. Richardson), Tynside (J.A. Fease), S. Edinburgh (A. Dower), Glasgow Blackfriars (Sir Charles Cameron), Essex Walthamstow (S. Wood), Newcastle under Lyme (W. Allen), Shoreditch Hoxton (J. Stuart) and Wick Burghs (T.C. Hedderwick).

(2) An exception should be made for Leicester a double member constituency where the defeat of one of the Liberal candidates Hazell was partly due to the intervention of a Labour candidate Ramsay Macdonald.

George and C.P. Scott all kept their seats.

On the other hand the Liberal gains with the possible exception of Cremer in Haggerston, were all made by candidates who did not take an anti-war stand. Only a small minority of the large number of uncontested seats, - twenty-two, - were Liberal. Ten of these were in Wales where Liberalism was strong and a number of the rest were held by noted Imperialists, - Henry Fowler at Wolverhampton, George Harwood in Bolton, Edward Grey at Berwick and C.H. Palmer in Jarrow.

A good deal of Conservative propaganda was put out suggesting that to vote Liberal would be to vote for the Boers. A Conservative poster in the London constituency of Poplar ran "Remember Kruger is avowedly watching the result of this election. Britons stroke home. Give him no encouragement in Poplar...Remember that trade follows the flag. Have nothing to do with the Party that includes Little Englanders. Support Greater Britain and vote Bullivant." (1) This was an appeal from the war issues to wider Imperialism. Posters in J.E. Ellis' constituency

(1) East End News, 2nd October 1900.

denounced "Radical traitors", but although the Conservative candidate was a wealthy local brewer, Ellis scraped home with a majority of four hundred and forty six. (1)

Tory placards in Northampton read "Every vote given to Labouchere is a Boer bullet shot at your brother soldiers who are going to give their lives for you." (2)

Labouchere and Shipman the other Liberal were returned however. Shipman took a moderate stand in the campaign declaring that although war could have been avoided he was for annexation with internal self-government. (3)

There was much more Conservative and some Liberal opposition to Labouchere - it had been suggested that the Liberals should drop Labouchere and run an Imperialist Liberal with Shipman. Socialists in Northampton had been urged to support Labouchere, (4) - there had been a Socialist candidate in 1895, but he probably scotched the opposition partly by taking a more than usually moderate

(1) A.T. Bassett, Op cit, p.178.

(2) Northampton Daily Reporter, 27th September 1900.

(3) Ibid, 25th September 1900.

(4) Ibid, 27th September 1900.

position, - as he wrote "I had the president of the Northampton Radical Association nearly to stand against me and he had a good deal of support in the Association. But I soon settled him and his friends, - I accepted the views of Campbell-Bannerman (ie. a middle of the road position) and cursed Chamberlain (always popular with Liberals)" (1) In the event Shipman got one hundred and fifty-six votes more than Labouchere, most of them from Conservatives, - there were three hundred and forty-five votes for Shipman in conjunction with one of the Tory candidates, but only eighty seven combined Labouchere and Tory votes. (2) Possibly a number of Socialists plumped for Labouchere but not for Shipman.

This highlights a feature of the election, - that many Liberal candidates expressed very toned down views on the war, in some cases little different from those of Conservatives.

In the East End constituencies in Tower Hamlets only Lansbury in Bow and Bromley took an anti-war stand

(1) Herbert Gladstone MSS. ADD.MSS.46,016, Labouchere to Gladstone, 21st October 1900.

(2) Northampton Daily Reporter, 3rd October 1900, the exact figures were - Shipman, 5,437, Labouchere 5,281.

stating in his manifesto, - "I now put on record my view that the war in South Africa was an unjust war got up like the Jameson Raid in the interests solely of gold and diamond mine owners and millionaires." (1)

Even Lansbury concentrated mainly on home affairs and social reform however. In Limehouse the Liberal candidate William Pearce the owner of a chemical works announced "...it is too late to discuss the events which led up to the war in South Africa. When war begins Party is forgotten. The inevitable result of the war is the inclusion of the Transvaal and Orange Free State in Her Majesty's Dominions. An early peace must now be secured by wise and just rule, which will enable the British system of colonial self-government to be established at the earliest possible moment." (2)

Sidney Buxton in Poplar was all for annexation, and the Liberal candidate in St. Gorges vehemently denied that he was a supporter of the Boers or a Little Englander. (3)

(1) Lansbury MSS. Vol 1, letters 1877-1900, General Election Manifesto 1900.

(2) East End News, 2nd October 1900.

(3) Ibid, 25th September, 5th October 1900.

While G.C. Clarke the Liberal candidate at Mile End thought "Whatever may be our individual opinion as to the diplomacy which began the war in South Africa, I feel that in the interests of permanent peace we are now compelled to accept the principle of annexation." (1)

The Liberal candidate in Camborne W.S. Caine always advocated the annexation of the Republics; he defeated the Liberal Unionist by one hundred and four votes. The issues in the election were not the war on which both candidates were agreed, but the depression in the mining industry which had not been alleviated by the Conservatives. (2)

The Liberal candidate at Truro likewise held that the Republics should be annexed and that Liberals should not throw away the Empire. (3) Pro-Boer taunts would not stick if Liberals took this point of view.

In Leicestershire two candidates C.P. McLaren (Bosworth division) and J.W. Logan (Harborough division) who had both voted for Stanhope, had reverted to a very Imperialist stand by October. Logan announced "our

(1) Ibid, 2nd October 1900.

(2) Cornubian and Redruth Times, 5th October 1900.

(3) Ibid.

very existence as an Imperial nation depends upon the complete success of the war when we had once entered upon it." (1) And McLaren - "The Liberal Party

leaving out a few irresponsible individuals who were not real Liberals, were pledged to maintain British supremacy and British interests in South Africa." (2)

The Liberal candidate in Loughborough, though he avoided discussion of the war as much as possible, also believed in maintaining the integrity of the Empire. (3)

In Leicester Hazell stated that the settlement in South Africa would be the same whether Liberals or Conservatives were in power. (4) Broadhurst sidestepped the annexation question by taking the view that annexation was already an accomplished fact, - he went on to say that the Empire could not be entrusted to the Conservatives - "It is because I am a Big Englander, it is because I

(1) Leicester Daily Post, 24th September 1900.

(2) Ibid, 25th September 1900.

(3) Ibid, 22nd September 1900.

(4) Ibid, 21st September 1900.

am an Imperialist in these things that I want to warn my fellow countrymen against unwise policies.." (1)

The daily paper concluded "...neither the Liberal candidates nor their constituents have been hostile to the prosecution of the campaign ever since the Boers flung down their ultimatum and invaded the Imperial territory." (2) Even Macdonald though against annexation, professed to believe in a peaceful federation of Dutch and British. (3)

Thus either out of conviction or expediency, a number of Liberals accepted basically the Government's view on the war in South Africa. They tried to base their position on a distinctive Liberal Imperialist stand, - emphasising sane, respectable Imperialism of self-governing colonies; they clung to the hope that the settlement in South Africa could be in line with Liberal views on colonial self-government. But at the same time they accepted the newer Imperialism of expansion and also accepted the Empire as a unit of over-riding importance,

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid., 28th September 1900.

(3) Ibid., 29th September 1900.

and Imperialism as a significant ideology.

Conclusion.

By 1900 most Liberals accepted unquestioningly the Empire of the self-governing colonies and India. More significant was the gradual awareness and acceptance of the Imperialist expansion into tropical areas. Expansion in Africa in the course of frontier wars with native tribes, had been quietly going on for some years before 1880. But this had been largely unnoticed by the general public. From the 1870's however there was a growing consciousness of expansion, an increased interest in it, and the construction of an elaborate case to justify it. An Imperialist ideology developed.

The opponents of expansion carried on a long rear-guard action. Opposition was led by two main groups, - the Liberal Nonconformists and the Socialist/Radicals. But these groups had little in common except hostility to further expansion of the Empire. They differed considerably in their views on domestic politics and social reform. They were tenuously

linked by a few Radical M.Ps. But by no means all Nonconformists were advanced social reformers; many of them were middle class entrepreneurs who adhered to the laissez faire attitudes of the mid-nineteenth century; Nonconformity was making little headway among the working classes at this time. Socialists with collectivist ideas on the role of the state had little rapport with Gladstonian Quakers or Baptists.

Their analysis of Imperialism also differed. Socialists relied heavily on economic factors. They thought that capitalism's search for new markets was the major cause of African expansion. They made a good deal of the fact that Imperialism would actually be detrimental to the working class at home as well as to natives in Africa. Liberals and Radicals viewed Imperialism and social reform as mutually exclusive. J.A. Hobson's interpretation of the Boer War as in the interests of financial speculators, percolated down to Liberals at the end of the century. But Nonconformists did not usually see the issue in terms of class interests or in terms of economic gain. To them Imperialism was

wrong for all strata of society because it was immoral and unChristian. It was not only an unfortunate error, but a sin and a crime against humanity. Greed for territory offended against Nonconformist values of respect for the rights of other nations, non-intervention and the pursuit of peace. But Nonconformists might unwittingly become Imperialists by their very zeal to spread liberal values, - as in the Egyptian occupation of 1882. One disadvantage for the anti-Imperialist position was that Nonconformity and the essentially moral values it represented were becoming old-fashioned by 1900 and their appeal to the public was declining.

Moral arguments in any case were effectively checked when they came up against more persuasive moral claims in the shape of humanitarian Imperialism which saw expansion as a cure for the evils of the slave trade, or as an infallible method of winning Christian converts. The Nonconformists tended to side step these arguments, the Socialist to condemn them as blatant hypocrisy. Neither approach was convincing to

people who were genuinely concerned about slavery or the fate of the missions. The opponents of expansion never adequately analysed the philanthropic roots of Imperialism or the related idea that Britain had important obligations towards the African people.

Between 1880 and 1900 a large section of the Liberal Party succumbed to the new Imperialism, either through expediency or through lack of resistance to convincing expansionist arguments. The protest against the Sudan War in 1885, was perhaps the high point of Liberal opposition to expansion; after this, opposition was increasingly eroded. Liberal silence was especially noticable during the Uganda episode in 1892 and the Fashoda crisis in 1898.

The Conservative Party on the other hand found Imperialism much more to its taste and became thoroughly pervaded with Imperialist ideas in this period. Conservative Imperialism was a natural development of Disraeli's strong nationalistic foreign policy; especially important was the jingo appeal to local Conservative Associations and working men's clubs, and the adoption of Imperialism

by fringe groups such as the Primrose League and the Patriotic Association. Aristocrats often took the lead in organising pro-Empire meetings, mainly because of their strong tie with the Conservative Party and the Church of England. A number of aristocrats such as Lord Lorne, Lord Aberdare, Lord Abercorn and the Earl of Fife, were directors of the chartered companies. But other groups were equally important in the spread of the Imperialist ethos, - humanitarians and members of missionary societies, writers, explorers and geographers. (1)

Imperialists and anti-Imperialists were divided on politico/religious lines. Imperialists were generally Conservative (or Liberal Unionist) and Church of England; Anti-Imperialists Radical or Nonconformist. The Church of England helped to provide a religious dimension for Imperialism, firstly by the enthusiasm surrounding its foreign missions, and secondly by constructing a theory of the divinely appointed destiny of the British people to rule the earth.

(1) French Imperialism also received a good deal of support from writers, members of geographical societies and intellectuals; see H. Brunschwig, Myths et réalités de l'imperialisme colonial Française, 1960.

The issues in which public opinion was most interested were those of the Sudan and South Africa. The areas where humanitarian arguments were most important, - Uganda and East Africa, - never became the centre of popular attention. Religion and anti-slave trade agitation had little popular appeal. The public was more likely to respond to more spectacular situations, - Gordon besieged at Khartoum or the Dutch threat in South Africa; these were situations which contained all the tensions of possible defeat and humiliation, and gave full play to grand military exploits and dramatic adventures. A good deal also depended on the designs of the Conservative Party. In 1885 the Conservatives were striving to embarrass the Government over its Sudan policy; in 1899 they were anxious to win public support for a confrontation with the Transvaal. But they were more equivocal about annexations in East/Central Africa. Popular Imperialism was a phenomenon very closely connected with the Conservative position; it could not be divorced from a general Conservative point of view.

Practical economic prospects in Africa were not greatly emphasised by grass roots Imperialists. More

important were militarism, nationalism, the racial superiority of the British and the delights of painting the map red for its own sake. Most Conservatives in the local associations were highly sensitive to humiliation and defeat by foreign powers. They were not only vociferous about specific instances of expansion but related these to the fate of the Empire as a whole. A highly aggressive extreme of Imperialist feeling was jingoism with its exaggerated patriotism and xenophobia, and glorification of violence. Jingoism was largely anti-rational; anyone who whipped up the right amount of emotion could be a jingo. For this reason it was disowned by the more respectable Imperialists, especially when it erupted in mass demonstrations and physical attacks on the peace party during the Boer War. The main strand in popular Imperialism as expressed through resolutions etc. were psychological, - it was a mixture of exuberance and exaltation at the thought of grabbing new slices of territory, and of aggression at the idea of being thwarted by foreigners in this design. This determination not to be outwitted by other European nations

in the African scramble was a vague reflection of the attitudes of politicians and civil servants who saw expansion of the Empire as an extension of European rivalries. But the public paid little precise attention to the repercussions of foreign diplomacy.

J.A. Hobson's model of financial Imperialism - a search for outlets for surplus capital, ⁽¹⁾ found only a slight echo in the motives put forward by pressure groups or by the public, for expansion. There was some profitable trade in West Africa, but only potential trade in the Sudan, Uganda or Central Africa. Economic arguments in relation to tropical Africa did not rest on their own merits, but were an extension of the anti-slavery or missionary cases. Investment possibilities only applied to Egypt and South Africa. Economic motives played some part in the development of an Imperialist ideology, but they were only one aspect of the Imperialist case; humanitarian arguments were at least as important. The official preoccupation with the route to India via

(1) J.A. Hobson, Imperialism, a study, London 3rd edition 1938.

A.K. Cairncross, Home and Foreign Investment 1870-1913, London 1953, concludes that a quarter of total British foreign investments in this period went to the Empire, but the great bulk of this went to the self-governing colonies.

the Suez Canal or the Cape, reintroduced the economic argument at second hand, since India was a major field of wealth and investment; but popular Imperialism was only marginally concerned with the sea route to India.

Schumpeter's analysis of Imperialism to some extent fits popular opinions on Africa. (1) The Imperialists of 1880 to 1900 had many of the attitudes which Schumpeter ascribes to the remnants of the Feudal order, - the love of expansion for its own sake often without any practical motive, the appeal to force and the concern with aggressive militarism.

By 1900 there were very few consistent anti-Imperialists left; only a small core of M.Ps. headed by the veterans Clark and Labouchere, remained, who had systematically opposed Imperialism in all its guises since 1880. Most Liberals were inclined to differentiate between Imperialism which was legitimate and acceptable and Imperialism which was not. There

(1) J. Schumpeter, Imperialism and Social Classes, translated by F.M. Sweezy, 1951.

were an increasing number of instances where expansion of the Empire was acceptable, - Uganda and Fashoda. Liberal opposition became more and more confined to those occasions when Imperialism overstepped the bounds of decency. The diplomacy leading up to the Boer War was particularly suspect because it looked as though the Government were deliberately forcing a conflict on the Boers over issues which could have been settled peaceably. Liberals opposed the war, not because they were anti-Imperialists, but because the objectives of British Imperialism could, in this case, have been obtained less aggressively.

The question of African expansion had become not one of whether expansion was right or wrong in an absolute sense, but which particular instances could be justified, - which were examples of true or sane Imperialism.

Appendix 1.Resolutions sent to C.O. June-October 1899, before the outbreak of the Boer War.

	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug.</u>	<u>Sept.</u> <u>1-14th</u>	<u>Sept.</u> <u>15-21</u>	<u>Sept.</u> <u>22-30</u>	<u>Oct.</u> <u>1-11th</u>	<u>Total</u>
Pro-Govt.	16	12	15	12	12	28	95	190
Anti-war.	3	12	6	29	42	63	95	250
Conservative, Lib. Un. & Primrose League.	4	1	3	7	12	24	80	131
Conservative public meetings.	12	10	12	4		2	9	49
Conservative miscellaneous.		1		1		2	6	10
Nonconformist	1	2	2	18	27	33	65	148
Liberal		6	1	5	8	12	11	43
Socialist & working class.	1	3	2	5	5	6	3	25
Other anti- war public meetings.		1		1	2	7	6	17
Anti-war miscellaneous.	1		1			5	10	17
Total.	19	24	21	41	54	91	190	440.

Appendix 1.

1. The 12 Conservative resolution between 15th & 22nd Sept. include one pro-Govt. resolution from Portsmouth Liberal and Radical Club.
2. The 6 Liberal resolutions in July include one from Gateshead Temperance Society sent in by Miss Mawson an enthusiastic Liberal who also forwarded the Gateshead W.L.A. resolution.
3. The 6 Socialist resolutions sent between 22nd & 30th Sept. include one jointly passed by Yeadon I.L.F., Spiritualist Society and Adult School.
4. Some of the 34 Anti-war public meetings and miscellaneous resolutions emanated partly from Liberals and Nonconformists.
5. The Conservative public meetings include those organised by Conservative Associations or I.S.A.A.

Appendix 2.The 1900 General Election.Conservative Gains.

E. Aberdeenshire **
 S.W. Bethnal Green **
 Burnley **
 Cockermouth **
 Eskdale N. Cumberland
 Devon, Tavistock
 Dumfriesshire **
 S.E. Durham *
 Tyneside *
 S. Edinburgh *
 Essex Walthamstow *
 Glasgow, Blackfriars *
 Glasgow, Bridgeton
 Hanley
 Lancs, Middleton **
 Lancs, Southport,
 Leeds, East + + +
 Leicester + + +
 Gainsborough, Lincs
 Middlesbrough
 Monmouth District
 Newcastle under Lyme *
 Oldham
 Plymouth
 Portsmouth (2 seats)

Liberal Gains.

N. Camberwell
 Wisbech, Cambridgeshire
 Cardiff District
 Carmarthen District
 Derby (2 seats) 1 Labour
 candidate + + +
 High Peak, Derbyshire
 Barnstaple, Devon,
 Torquay
 Gloucester
 Stroud, Gloucs
 Grantham
 Hartlepool
 Hastings
 Invernesshire
 Lancs, Lancaster
 Lancs, Radcliffe
 Spalding, Lincs
 Maidstone
 Northampton **
 Mid Northants
 Radnorshire
 Shoreditch, Haggerston **
 Swansea Town
 Walsall

Conservative Gains.

Sheffield (Brightside) **
 Shoreditch (Hoxton) *
 Southampton
 Burton Staffs
 Stockton on Tees **
 Sunderland +++
 Sutherland **
 Tower Hamlets, (Stepney) **
 Wick Burghs *

Liberal Gains.

Rugby
 Appleby (Westmoreland)
 Westbury (Wilts)
 S. Wolverhampton
 Otley (Yorks)
 Shipton (Yorks)
 Crewe
 Camborne (Cornwall)

** = Liberal candidate strongly anti-war.

* = Liberal candidate voted for Stanhope.

+++ = Labour Representation Committee candidate stood.

N.B. At Northampton the Liberal gain was made by an equivocal candidate but Labouchere was noted as anti-war.

Scotland.

	Liberal seats,	Unionist seats,
1885,	62	10
1886,	43	29
1892,	50	22
1895,	39	33
1900,	35	37

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